
9.30am, 29th January 2026, County Hall, County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr

FIRST PART OF MEETING (9.30am to 10am):

South Ayrshire Youth Voice Team and Youth Council will provide the CPP Board with an update and overview of their priorities and will share some of the ongoing work and highlights.

The presentation will include the launch of the Louder Together Youth Voice Pledge which highlights the importance of youth participation in local decision making and how to engage with young people effectively. It is hoped that key decision makers endorse the ongoing work and the commitment and approaches moving forward.

SECOND PART OF MEETING (10am): ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. **Welcome**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Apologies**
4. **Minutes of the Meeting of 4th December 2025**
5. **Systems-based approach to physical activity in Scotland**
Presentation by Sports Scotland and Public Health Scotland
6. **Biodiversity Strategy**
Report by Chair, Sustainability Strategic Delivery Partnership
7. **Community Planning Executive Annual Review Feedback – the future of Locality Planning Partnerships**
Presentation by Assistant Director (Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance) and Senior Managers (Localities), South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
8. **South Ayrshire Violence Against Women Strategy (2026-2029)**
Report by Thriving Communities Co-ordinator, South Ayrshire Council
9. **AOCB**
10. **Date of next meeting: 7th May 2026**

2026 Meeting Schedule:

All meetings will start at 9.30am

- 7th May 2026
- 3rd September 2026
- 3rd December 2026

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnerships Board held at 9.30 am on Thursday 4 December 2025 in County Hall, County Buildings, Ayr

Board Members:

Kevin Anderson (Chair), Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance (SAC); **Angela Cox**, Principal Ayrshire College; **Scott Mulholland**, Director of Education (SAC); **Sally Amor**, Public Health Consultant; **Claire Baird**, Chief Executive, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce; **Audrey McNeish**, VASA; and **Stephen Penman**, Chief Executive, South Ayrshire Council.

Officers:

Mark Inglis, Director of Health and Social Care; **Susan McCardie**, Service Lead, Performance, Community Planning and Sustainability (SAC); **Lorna Jarvie**, Co-ordinator – Sustainability and Climate Change (SAC); **Jamie Tait**, Service Lead – Thriving Communities (SAC); **Lisa McGuinness**, Scottish Government; **Elizabeth Dougall**, Senior Policy Officer (SAC); **Cl Stephen McGrath**, Chair of Community Safety Partnership; **Lesley Reid**, Senior Manager – Localities; **Lisa McAlpine**, Senior Manager – Localities; **Chris Carroll**, Service Lead – Housing Strategy and Regeneration; **Laura Thomson**, Senior Policy Officer – Housing; **Shaun McGhee**, Senior Communities Officer; **Jayne Richardson**, VASA; **Steven Kelly**, Quality Assurance Officer; and **Stephanie Dickson**, Community Planning and Equalities Assistant.

Apologies:

Councillor Julie Dettbarn; **Councillor Brian Connolly**; **Rebecca Brown**, Scottish Enterprise; **Professor Gordon James**, Chief Executive, NHS Ayrshire and Arran; **Claire Tooze**, Area Manager – Skills Development Scotland; **Marcus Ross**; Vice-Principal - Planning and Recruitment (UWS); **Kevin Murphy**, Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue; **Jane Bradley**, Director – Communities and Transformation; **Lesley Bowie**, Board Chair, NHS Ayrshire and Arran; **Marie Oliver**; Chief Executive Officer, VASA; **Sian Williams** – NatureScot; **Dean Anderson**, Service Lead (DWP); **Suzanne Chow**; Divisional Commander – Police Scotland; **David White**; Ayr United Football Club; **John Binning**, SPT; **Susan Gallagher**, Scottish Government; **Gillian Carroll**, Children's Services Co-ordinator (SAC); and **Stewart Marshall**, Senior Manager, Localities (H&SCP);

FIRST PART OF THE MEETING

The first part of the meeting was a workshop session which focussed on the progress update of the Connect South Ayrshire model presented to South Ayrshire Integration Joint Board.

Following an overview of the key points from the evaluation, there was a demonstration of the Connect South Ayrshire website. A discussion session then took place with Community Planning Board members to consider what their respective organisations role and contribution could be to this model as it developed.

SECOND PART OF THE MEETING – BUSINESS

1 Welcome

Kevin Anderson (Chair) opened the meeting by welcoming all present to the Community Planning Partnership Board (the Board) meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members of the Board in terms of the Board's Standing Order No.10.

3. Apologies

As above.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

The Minutes of the Community Planning Board (the Board) of 4 September 2025 (circulated) were submitted and approved with the amendment that Kevin Anderson was present at the meeting.

5. Preventing Homelessness in Scotland: recommendations for legal duties to prevent homelessness

A presentation was given by the Service Lead – Housing Strategy and Regeneration and Senior Policy Officer – Housing, South Ayrshire Council.

Following discussion and questions, the Chair thanked the officers for their interesting and informative presentation.

6. Parenting Promise Update

There was submitted a report (issued) of 11 November 2025 by the Co-ordinator (Planning and Performance) providing a refreshed Corporate Parenting Plan – South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise - for agreement.

The Director of Health and Social Care Partnership introduced the report.

Following discussion and questions, the Board

Decided: to agree the refreshed Parenting Promise document, attached as Appendix 1 to the report and agree for the Board to give delegated authority to the Director of Health and Social Care Partnership and the Director of Education to review and update South Ayrshire's Parenting Promise where required.

7. Joint Inspections Of Services For Children And Young People Subject To Compulsory Supervision Orders Living At Home With Their Parents

The Director of Health and Social Care provided the Board with a verbal update on the inspection of services for children and young people subject to compulsory supervision orders living at home with their parents.

The Board Decided: to note the update from the Director of Health and Social Care.

8. South Ayrshire Volunteering Strategy 2025-30

There was a presentation and verbal update by the Volunteer Involving Organisations Development Officer, VASA introducing the South Ayrshire Volunteering Strategy 2025-30 final draft for approval.

Following discussion and questions, the Board

Decided: to approve the final draft.

9. Locality Planning Update

There was submitted a report (issued) providing an update on the various Locality Planning Partnerships (LLPs).

Following discussion and questions, the Board

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

10(a) Strategic Delivery Partnership Updates

There were submitted reports (circulated) providing Board Members with an update; and Officers highlighted the key areas of work being undertaken within the partnerships since the last meeting of the Board.

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Children's Services Planning Partnership | (circulated) |
| 2. Community Safety | (circulated) |
| 3. Financial Inclusion and Growth | (circulated) |
| 4. Population Health | (circulated) |
| 5. Sustainability | (circulated) |

After discussion, the Board

Decided: to note the contents of each report.

10(b) Update from Community Planning Participation and Engagement

There was submitted a report (issued) providing Board Members with an update.

The Board

Decided: to note the update.

11. Third Sector Interface Update: Voluntary Action South Ayrshire

There was submitted a report (issued) dated 29 October 2025 providing Board Members with an update.

Reference was made to [‘The Homecare Deficit 2025’](#) report, published in November 2025 by the Homecare Association. This is a UK wide comparison report. Data for Scotland, broken down by local authority area is available from page 119.

The Board

Decided: to note the update.

12. National Community Planning Improvement Board – Shaping Future Priorities

The Assistant Director – Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance, SAC provided the Board with an update on the National Community Planning Improvement Board's Shaping Future Priorities.

Having thanked the Assistant Director for his update, the Board

Decided: to note the update.

13. Any Other Competent Business

None

14. Date of Next Meetings:

The next Board meeting will take place on 26 January 2026.

The meeting ended at 12.22pm

South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board



Report by Chair Sustainability Strategic Delivery Partnership to
Community Planning Partnership Board Meeting of 29th January 2026

Subject: South Ayrshire Biodiversity Strategy

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the South Ayrshire Biodiversity Strategy for approval.

2 The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 approve the strategy attached at appendix one.**
- 2.2 encourage all partners to support development and delivery of the associated action plan via the nature subgroups of the Sustainability Strategic Delivery Partnership (SDP).**

3 Background

- 3.1 We are living at a time of mass species extinction at unprecedented rates. Our natural environment has been shaped by man to meet our historic and present-day needs, but recognition of the value of our natural capital in that provision has been missing - it is now in a depleted state. We have seen a 65% decrease in abundance of UK priority species between 1965 and 2019 according to the Defra biodiversity indicators 2021.
- 3.2 While it can be easy to dismiss nature conservation as something for David Attenborough documentaries and far off exotic locations, it is clear that nature is of critical importance to quality of life in South Ayrshire's communities. From green health to a clean water and air, to pollination to provide the food we eat and absorbing the impacts of a changing climate, the services the people of South Ayrshire need are all underlain and supported by the ecosystem services that nature can provide. Economically, the natural beauty of our scenic coastal region and rolling countryside attracts many to come to our region every year, for tourists to visit, but also motivates many to make South Ayrshire their home and a good place to do business. Nature is a critical input to the interdependent systems that support us here in South Ayrshire, underlying everything we are doing in our LOIP and provision of services as partners.

- 3.3 Climate and nature are inseparably interlinked, continuously responding to the threats and opportunities each element faces. As such working with nature is one of our greatest communication tools in the climate and nature crisis. By connecting people with nature, we can communicate most clearly the value at stake, supporting people in identifying themselves in the twin emergencies we face and how they relate to them as individuals. This can help each of us to see our lives in terms of the roles we can play individually and in our communities to both protect and enhance nature, tackle the climate crisis and live more sustainably, leading to lasting behaviour change which is mutually beneficial for our individual health and wellbeing and addressing the emergencies we face in a sustainable way.
- 3.4 In Ayrshire, Enhancing Natural Capital has also been one of six priorities in the first year of the current Regional Economic Strategy. In South Ayrshire, Nature has been identified as a priority within our Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plan, with the Sustainability SDP taking this forward via their nature subgroups and a set of priority actions which have been reported to the board since the adoption of the LOIP.
- 3.5 South Ayrshire Council has legal duties to protect nature and has recognised the importance of nature as a signatory of the Edinburgh Declaration which calls on local authorities to deliver transformative actions, recognising the overall value of nature and integrating it into local planning, management and governance instruments. The Council has been working towards this commitment, investing allocated Nature Restoration Funds into identifying and improving South Ayrshire's key local nature networks.

4 Progress

- 4.1 The proposed strategy sets out how in South Ayrshire we will contribute to the global effort to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It responds locally to Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity which seeks to halt loss by 2030 and restore biodiversity by 2045.
- 4.2 Four aims are set out:
- Aim 1: Identify and facilitate a connected landscape for nature through nature networks;*
 - Aim 2: Secure and Mainstream Positive Effects for Biodiversity;*
 - Aim 3: Protect, enhance, restore and create habitat for nature; and*
 - Aim 4: Connect people with nature.*
- 4.3 Progress to date and proposed action areas are set out within the strategy in relation to each aim.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 It is proposed that a detailed action plan will be developed through the nature subgroup of the Sustainability SDP ensuring delivery of the nature LOIP priority through the areas set out within the strategy, as well as supporting robust monitoring and review. Progress will be reported through the Sustainability SDP and in turn to the CPP Board in due course.

6 Equalities

- 6.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out on this report including consideration of equalities. The associated summary report is attached as appendix 2.

Joint report by:

Lorna Jarvie
Chair Sustainability Strategic Delivery Partnership (SDP)

Joanne McEwan
Chair Nature Subgroup, Sustainability SDP

16 January 2026

South Ayrshire Biodiversity Strategy 2026



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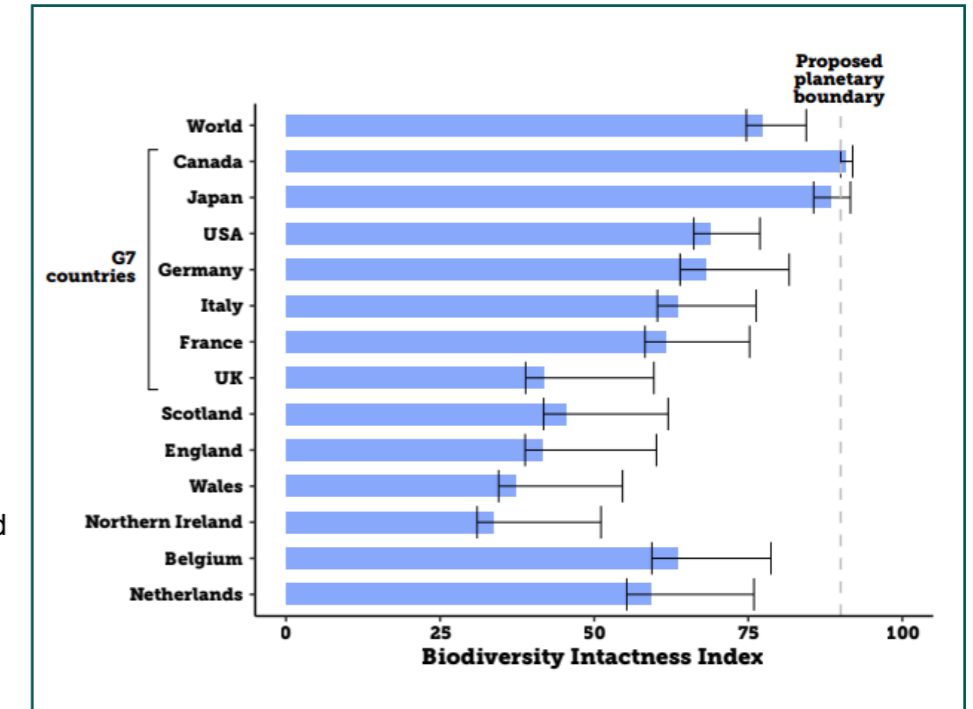
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Foreword

South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership acknowledges the ambitious targets for biodiversity set out in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and we are proud to introduce South Ayrshire’s first Biodiversity Strategy.

At its core this strategy is about conserving and enhancing our local wildlife and encouraging everyone in South Ayrshire to make space for nature.

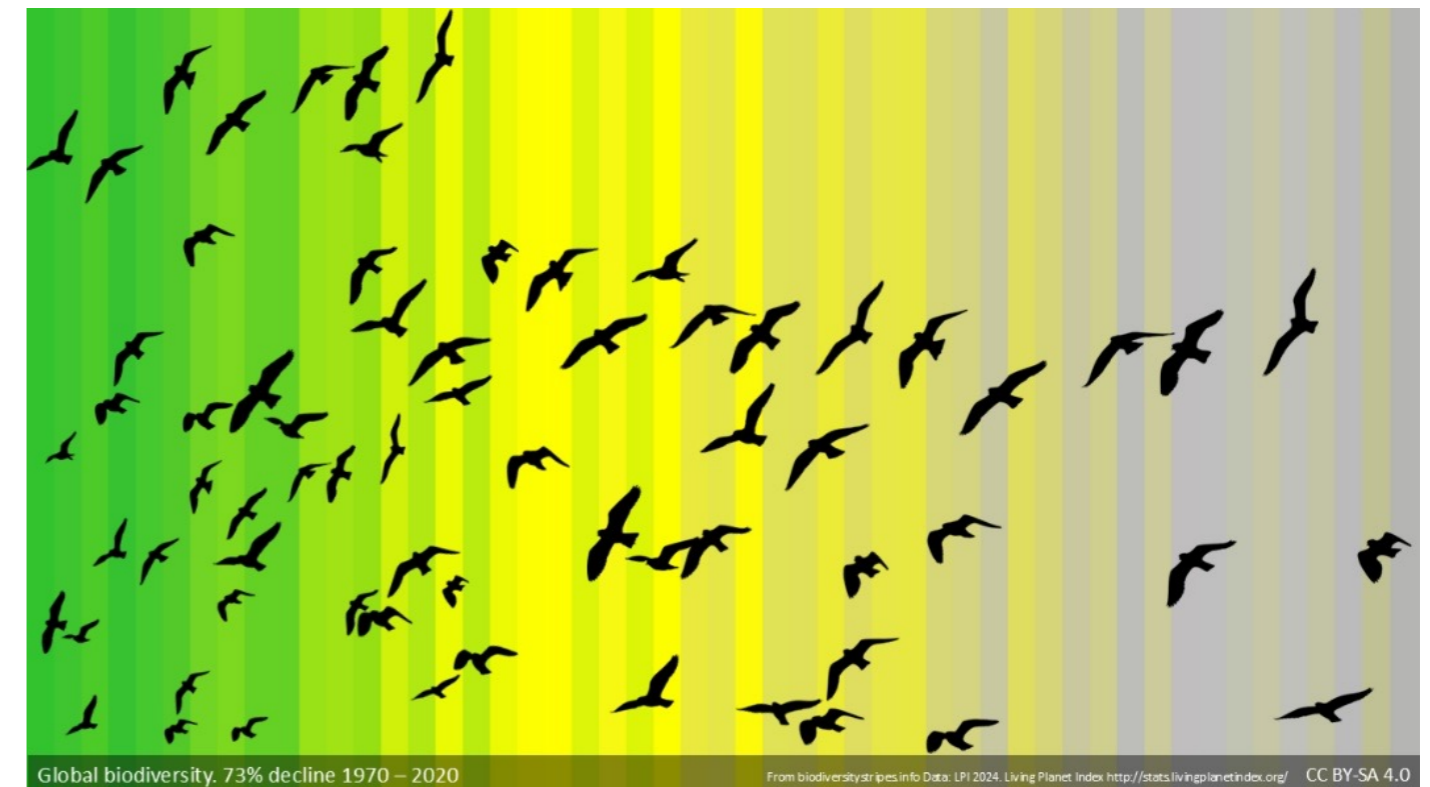
We are in a nature emergency; average global wildlife numbers have declined by 73% in the past 50 years (WWF), these declines are not limited to the world’s biodiversity hotspots but are also taking place closer to home. Scotland has retained just over half of its historic land-based biodiversity, this is slightly more than other parts of the UK, but Scotland still ranks in the bottom 25% of global nations for nature intactness.



Source: 2023 State of Nature - [Scotland - State of Nature](#)

The Scottish Government recognises that there is an urgent need to address biodiversity loss and has declared a climate and nature emergency. Scotland’s Strategic Framework for Biodiversity has the high-level goal to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and restore biodiversity by 2045.

This strategy is our response to the nature emergency and strategic framework set out by the Scottish Government.



Global biodiversity, 73% decline 1970 – 2020. From biodiversitystrips.info Data: LPI 2024, Living Planet Index <http://stats.livingplanetindex.org/> CC BY-SA 4.0

From biodiversitystrips.info Data LPI 2024, Living Planet Index database, 2024 www.livingplanetindex.org CC BY-SA 4.0 [#BiodiversityStripes](#)

1. Introduction

The Biodiversity Strategy is being produced at a time when urgency is building around the need to act decisively to address the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. This strategy outlines the actions South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership will implement to tackle the nature emergency over the next five years, providing a strategic framework with clear outcomes and actions to drive progress.

The strategy will contribute to Scotland’s goal of being nature positive by 2030, and the outcomes and targets as set out in Scotland’s Strategic Framework for Biodiversity.

Protecting, restoring, connecting and creating habitats for wildlife will be central to the South Ayrshire Biodiversity Strategy. To achieve this our primary aims for this 5 year period are:

- Aim 1: Identify and facilitate a connected landscape for nature through nature networks:
- Aim 2: Secure and mainstream positive effects for biodiversity:
- Aim 3: Protect, enhance, restore and create habitat for nature:
- Aim 4: Connect people with nature.

1.1 What is Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of all living things, including plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms such as bacteria, and any genetic variation within species. Each of these species work together in ecosystems. This web of life maintains all life on earth, providing food, clean water and air, raw materials, and other essential ecosystem services.

1.2 Why is Biodiversity Important

Biodiversity has enormous value in its own right; however, it is also central to our survival as a species.

Our economy, jobs, health and wellbeing depend on biodiversity, and it is an integral part of our culture and way of life. More than half of the world’s GDP (US\$44 trillion) is thought to be dependent on nature in some way. Yet humanity has caused the loss of 83% of all wild mammals and half of all plants. (Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, ScotGov 2023)

Natural Capital & Ecosystem Services

Natural Capital is everything we get from the natural world that benefits us. It is a concept that recognises that stock of natural elements, such as forests, biodiversity, soils and rivers are a valuable asset to society. Biodiversity is a core component of natural capital it underpins the ecological condition and quality of ecosystems that support the provision of ecosystem services.

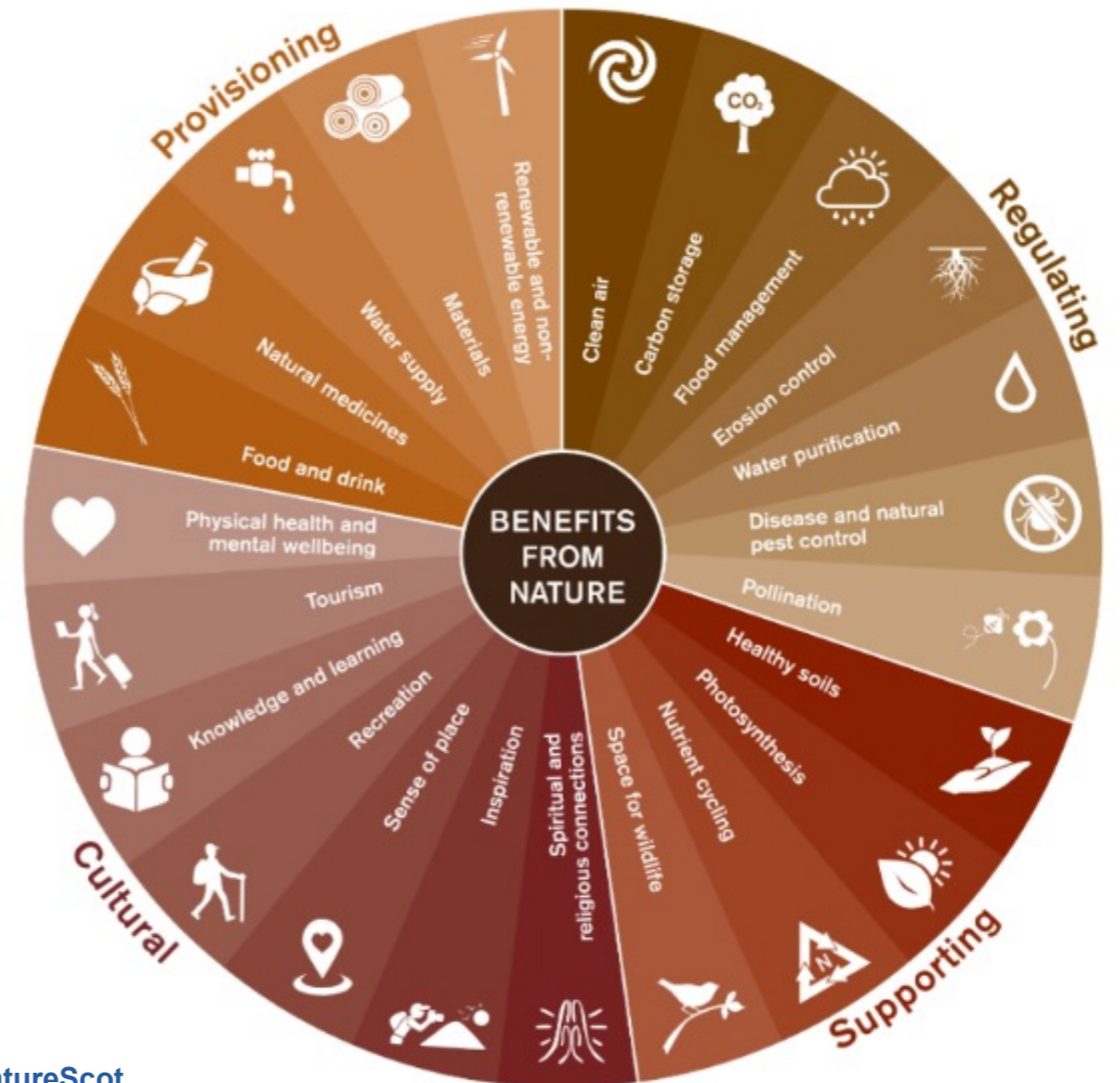
Enhanced natural capital is a priority theme of the Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy. The Biodiversity Strategy will support the delivery of this, as a healthy natural environment has economic benefits for the region.



The example below illustrates how forests (Natural Capital) provides all of these services.

Natural Capital	Forest/Woodland	
Ecosystem Service	What it means	Forest Example
Provisioning	Tangible goods	Timber, food, medicine
Regulating	Regulate environmental conditions	Water regulations, carbon storage
Cultural	Non-material benefits	Recreation, wellbeing, aesthetic value
Supporting	Fundamental life supporting processes	Nutrient cycling, soil formation

Ecosystem Services are the direct and indirect contributions ecosystems provide that we require to survive. There are four types of ecosystem services: Provisioning, Regulating, Cultural and Supporting.

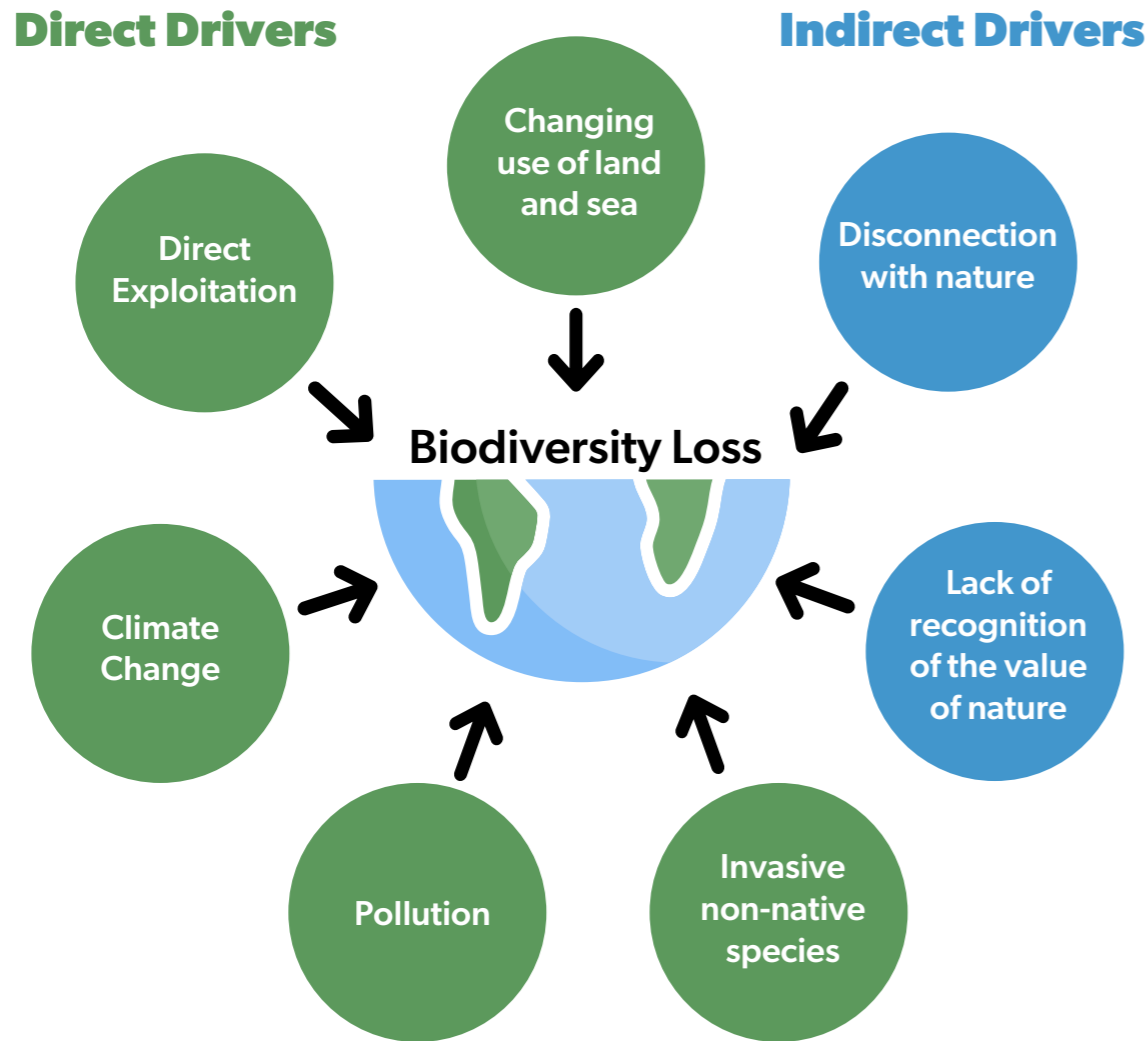


NatureScot

1.3 Threats to Biodiversity

Most people are aware of the wide variety of wildlife, flora and fauna, with which humans share the natural environment and of the increasing numbers of threats they face.

In the last century human impacts have led to large scale loss of biodiversity, this is occurring worldwide and at a local level, within the United Kingdom more than one hundred species have disappeared. The IPBES Global Assessment of Biodiversity (May 2019) report identified five direct drivers of global biodiversity loss and two indirect drivers:



2. Strategic Context

In 2022 at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted which set out four long-term goals and twenty three targets for the 2050 Vision for biodiversity.

In response to this the Scottish Government have introduced Scotland's Strategic Framework for Biodiversity, with aims to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and restore biodiversity by 2045. This includes the [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045](#) and the first [delivery plan 2024-2030](#).

The South Ayrshire Biodiversity Strategy sets out how we aim to contribute locally to the global effort to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Some of the key international, national and local policy context is set out below:

International 	The UN Convention on Biodiversity Kunming -Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework	The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)	The UN Sustainable Development Goals	The Edinburgh Declaration
	National	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045	Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill	Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004
Regional & Local 	Ayrshire Regional Economic Strategy	SAC Local Outcomes Improvement plan 2024-2029	South Ayrshire Council Plan 2023-2028	SAC Local Development Plan
	SAC Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy	SAC Open Space Strategy	SAC Food Growing Strategy	

Curlew

Curlew, although often seen in winter in large numbers around coasts and estuaries, migrate inland in spring to nest in upland farmland and lowland moorland. They favour semi-natural, rough grazing or less intensively managed moorland or arable land, livestock farms in Scotland's marginal uplands provide important habitat. The breeding population of curlews has declined by almost 50% since the mid 1990s, mainly due to loss or fragmentation of suitable habitat. Maintaining diverse habitats such as open ground that has vegetation of different heights for hiding nests and chicks, wet areas with broken ground for feeding on worms and insects and minimising disturbance/predation can help these ground nesting birds.

Photography by Eric Rietveld

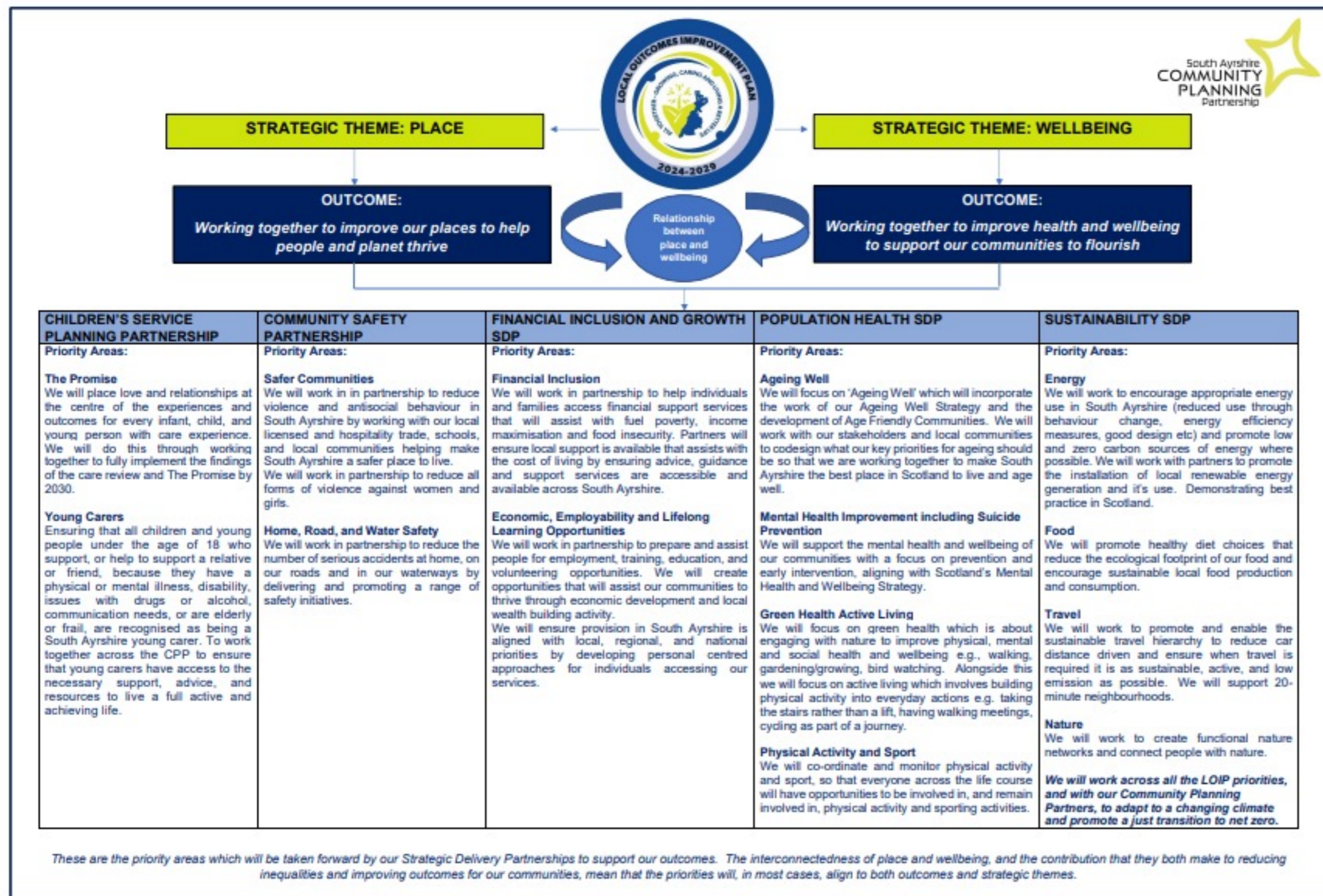


Photography by Eric Rietveld

2.1 The Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2024 – 2029

The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) is a statutory requirement under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, that mandates Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) to produce a LOIP and locality plan.

Nature is a priority area with the Sustainability Strategic Development Partnership (SDP). Delivery of the Biodiversity Strategy actions will be overseen by the Nature Subgroup reporting to the Sustainability SDP and in turn the Community Planning Board.



2.2 South Ayrshire Council Plan 2023-2028

Sustainability, climate change and biodiversity

The council aims to both fulfil and show leadership in relation to our statutory climate change, sustainability, and biodiversity duties across all our services, decision making and work with partners. We have committed to be net zero by 2045 and to adapt to the already locked in impacts of a changing climate. In doing so we aim to ensure a just transition for people and nature, supporting ecological recovery and wellbeing, reducing inequalities and creating sustainable, liveable places where people are connected to nature, climate literate and understand the natural systems we rely on, are supported to develop green skills and can work in a fast-evolving local green jobs market, travel less overall and make active and sustainable travel choices first.

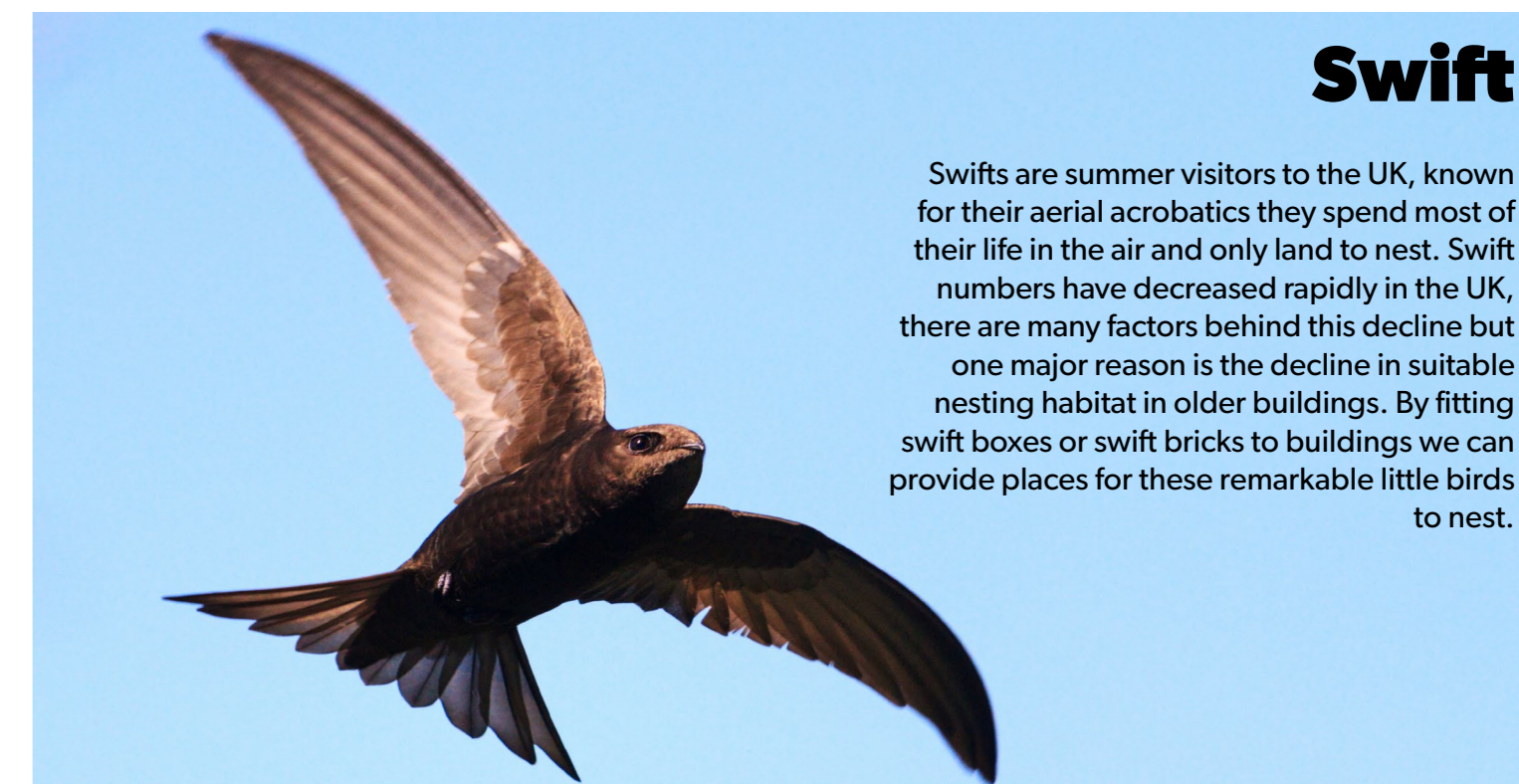
Sustainability, Climate Change and Biodiversity is a cross-cutting theme for the current South Ayrshire Council Plan.

2.3 Edinburgh Declaration

The Edinburgh Declaration, signed by South Ayrshire Council, is a commitment by subnational governments and local authorities to address the challenges of biodiversity and climate change. It emphasizes the importance of healthy biodiversity, which is crucial for maintaining ecological health and the ecosystem services that supports human wellbeing.

The Edinburgh Declaration:

- recognises the vital contributions of local government in delivering biodiversity outcomes and calls for greater collaboration among various stakeholders, including local communities, and the private sector, to effectively address biodiversity challenges.
- calls for transformative changes across all levels of governance to halt biodiversity loss and address climate change effectively. This includes integrating biodiversity considerations into all sectors of policy and decision-making.



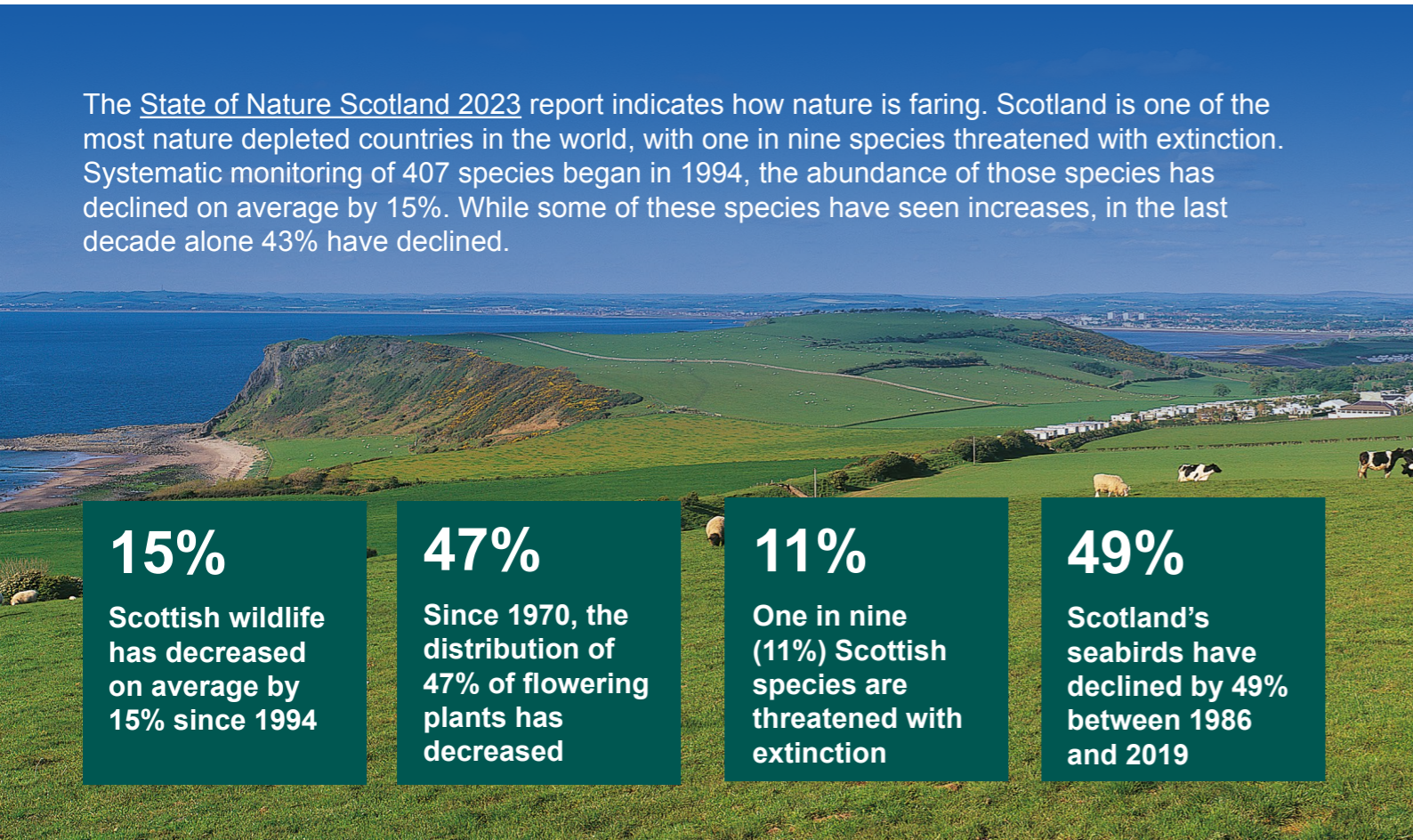
Swift

Swifts are summer visitors to the UK, known for their aerial acrobatics they spend most of their life in the air and only land to nest. Swift numbers have decreased rapidly in the UK, there are many factors behind this decline but one major reason is the decline in suitable nesting habitat in older buildings. By fitting swift boxes or swift bricks to buildings we can provide places for these remarkable little birds to nest.

3. State of Nature

3.1 Biodiversity in Scotland

The [State of Nature Scotland 2023](#) report indicates how nature is faring. Scotland is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, with one in nine species threatened with extinction. Systematic monitoring of 407 species began in 1994, the abundance of those species has declined on average by 15%. While some of these species have seen increases, in the last decade alone 43% have declined.



The evidence around the scale and nature of the biodiversity crisis is strong, the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 reports that:

In our terrestrial landscapes:

- The Biodiversity Intactness Indicator indicates that Scotland has retained just over half of its historic land-based biodiversity. That is slightly more than other parts of the UK, but Scotland still ranks in the bottom 25% of nations.
- Measurements of natural capital indicate it has declined by over 15% since 1950. The Natural Capital Asset Index finds that only around 64% of Scotland's protected woodlands are in a favourable or recovering condition despite being the habitat with the greatest ecosystem services potential in Scotland.

- There has been a 24% decline in average abundance of 352 terrestrial and freshwater species since 1994 (noting that 1994 was not a high point) and a 14% decline in range for 2,970 terrestrial and freshwater species since 1970.
- An expert review of diversity within species found that of 26 key species selected for assessment, four were classed as being at risk of severe genetic problems. Drought-sensitive plants (mosses and liverworts) have shown strong declines since 1990. Despite recent improvements in air quality, pollution-sensitive lichens have continued to decline since 1971.

3.2 Biodiversity in South Ayrshire

South Ayrshire is home to a wide range of habitats and species. Some of our important areas for nature are safeguarded through statutory protection, however many of our nature-rich areas do not have the same level of protection but are recognised locally as Wildlife sites.

The effects of climate change can already be seen in South Ayrshire, several species that once would have been considered a rarity for the region are now becoming more common. This northern expansion of species range in the UK is a significant response to climate change. Some plants and animals are struggling to survive in places they once thrived and have their habitat range squeezed into smaller areas. Upland and montane species are very vulnerable to rising temperatures. As are freshwater species, during the summer water temperatures are already near or encountering lethal high temperatures and oxygen depletion resulting in fish deaths. Statutory sites alone cannot protect biodiversity, for ecosystems to remain healthy they must be connected through the landscape. A connected landscape allows wildlife to move between areas of suitable habitat and into new areas, which increases the resilience of habitats and the populations of species using them.

3.2.1 Designated sites

There are a number of nature rich sites in South Ayrshire that are statutory designated sites or recognised locally as being important for nature.

In South Ayrshire we have 32 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), they are designated for either biological or geological features.

We have 14 biological, 15 geological and 3 mixed (biological and geological) sites. SSSIs are a statutory designation made by NatureScot under The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

There are 4 Natura sites in South Ayrshire, 2 Special Areas of Conservation(SACs) and 2 Special Protection Areas(SPAs), 2 of which are only partially located in South Ayrshire. Natura sites are the European network of protected sites.

In Scotland, SACs and SPAs are given legal protection by the Habitats Regulations.

Our wildlife sites are the next highest in value for nature conservation after statutorily designated sites. There are 105 Wildlife Sites, confirmed and provisional sites, in South Ayrshire designated by the Scottish Wildlife Trust (the Trust) for their importance for nature. In addition, the Trust manages 4 Reserves in South Ayrshire for the benefit of both people and wildlife, all of their reserves overlap in part with statutory designated sites.

Other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) are sites outside of protected areas that are managed effectively to achieve positive effects for biodiversity. There are currently no OECMs in South Ayrshire however sites that demonstrate effective management practices that contribute to biodiversity and meet NatureScots Nature30 criteria can become recognised as an OECM.



3.2.3 Species

South Ayrshire is home to a fantastic array of wildlife; animals, plants and fungi. Many of Scotland's iconic species are present at the southerly edge of their range and the region's mild climate also supports many more southerly species at their northern ranges in the UK.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 are key pieces of legislation that safeguard various species and their habitats. Further guidance can be found on the NatureScot website, [Species license A-Z](#) guide, which has information on many of Scotland's protected species and summaries of offences in relation to each one (NatureScot, 2025).

The [Scottish Biodiversity List](#) (SBL) for species i.e. animals, plants, and fungi have been identified as the focus for conservation efforts. However, there are species that are locally or regionally important to South Ayrshire that are not included on the Scottish Biodiversity List.

We will work with partners to identify a South Ayrshire Species List the list of notable species and review periodically. Some of the species in this list will also be listed on the SBL however others will not, these will be species of local rarity or distinctiveness or that have declined in numbers or range locally.

3.2.4 Biological Records

South West Scotland Environmental Information Centre (SWSEIC) is our local environmental records centre (LERC). SWSEIC are a not-for-profit organisation that collects, collates and manages biological records, and run workshops and events to engage more people with wildlife identification and recording.

Biological records are important to help us establish the distribution and size of species and detect any changes over time. This helps us understand how the environment is changing both positively in response to habitat creation or restoration work or negatively due to habitat loss or climate change.

This information is essential to protecting our local nature. The records assist with planning and development decision making ensuring rare and locally important species and habitats are protected from damage. They also identify suitable areas for enhancing and restoring habitat as well as creating new spaces thus, helping to create a connected landscape for wildlife.

As with many regions wildlife in South Ayrshire is under recorded. We will work together as a partnership to increase number of records for the region, through events, workshops, and promoting opportunities to involve more people in identifying local wildlife and sending in records.



4. Create a connected landscape for nature

4.1 Connected Landscape - Why this matters

Connectivity is an essential part of nature. When nature-rich sites are fragmented it is difficult for wildlife to move through the landscape to different areas. Creating a connected landscape for nature is key to the survival of animal and plant species, it is necessary for functioning and healthy ecosystems, and is crucial in ensuring genetic diversity and adaptation to pressures such as climate change.

One of the outcomes of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is that:

'Nature Networks across our landscapes will underpin the resilience and health of species and habitats'

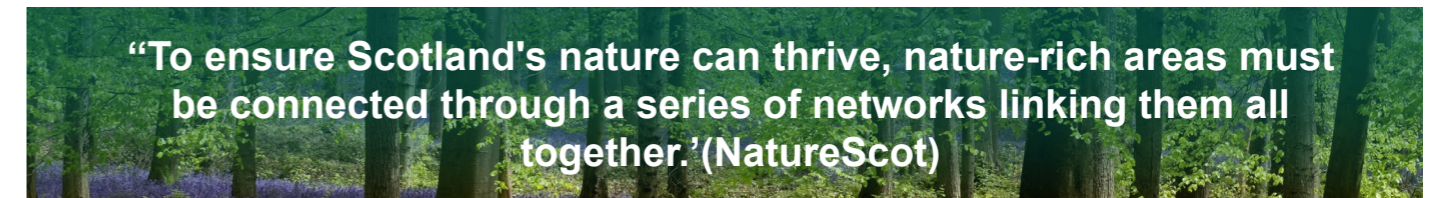
This will ensure nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects are connected through a series of areas of suitable habitat i.e. habitat corridors and stepping-stones of habitat. This regional and national approach to protect and restore nature, will also bring benefits to people as a key delivery mechanism of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy is that our:

'Towns and cities will include nature-rich environments close to all communities, contributing to Nature Networks and measurable increases in urban biodiversity.'

Nature Networks are also embedded in the fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) as a means of ensuring positive effects for biodiversity from development.



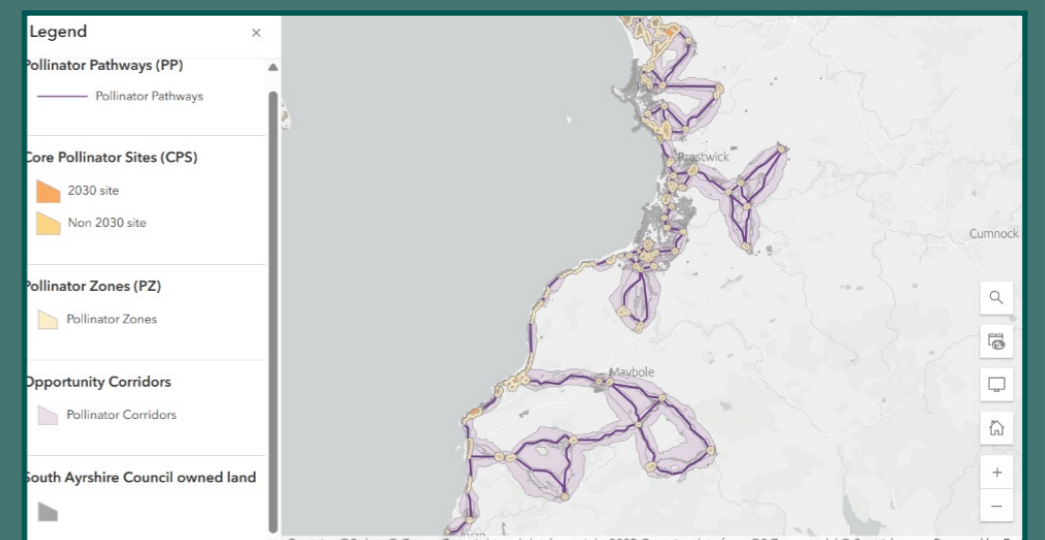
Photography by Eric Rietveld



4.2 Connected Landscape - Case Study

The Ayrshire Nectar Network is a flagship initiative led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust (The Trust) to create and connect nectar and pollen-rich habitats in South and North Ayrshire. The Trust has carried out habitat opportunity mapping using a Geographic Information System(GIS) model to identify viable gap sites in the pollinator habitat network. This mapping can be used to inform decision making for future habitat enhancement and creation projects.

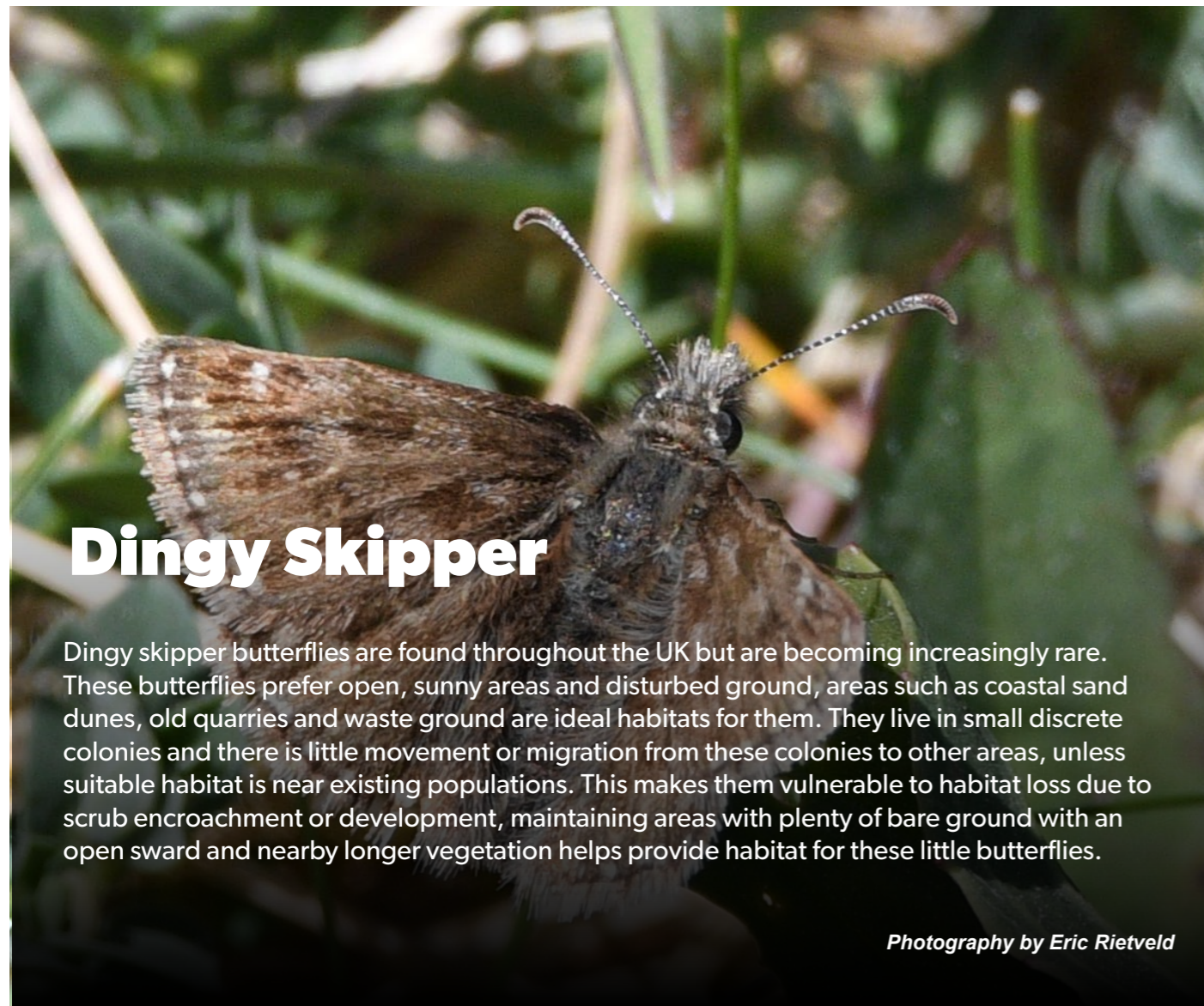
The Ayrshire Nectar Network has a strong community focus and works with landowners and local communities to address gaps in the pollinator habitat network.



4.3 Connected Landscape - Our key activities to 2030

Through the development of the new Local Development Plan 3(LDP3) South Ayrshire will facilitate the design and implementation of a spatially defined Nature Network by 2030. The draft Nature Network spatial mapping will be developed using available data and consultation with stakeholders through the LDP process. Our strategic Nature Network will aim to connect [30 by 30 sites](#) within South Ayrshire and consider appropriate nature network routes into neighbouring local authority areas.

South Ayrshire Council will create further habitat & opportunity mapping for other habitats including Woodlands, Wetlands and Bog & Heath. The Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) 2021 Habitat Connectivity Maps has already identified many existing opportunity areas for these habitats and by working with existing datasets and tools along with local expertise we aim to identify key sites for connecting habitats and identify opportunity gaps. We recognise our four river catchments already provide connectivity for wildlife through South Ayrshire, the protection and enhancement of the river and riparian habitats will be a vital contribution to connecting habitats on a landscape scale.



Dingy Skipper

Dingy skipper butterflies are found throughout the UK but are becoming increasingly rare. These butterflies prefer open, sunny areas and disturbed ground, areas such as coastal sand dunes, old quarries and waste ground are ideal habitats for them. They live in small discrete colonies and there is little movement or migration from these colonies to other areas, unless suitable habitat is near existing populations. This makes them vulnerable to habitat loss due to scrub encroachment or development, maintaining areas with plenty of bare ground with an open sward and nearby longer vegetation helps provide habitat for these little butterflies.

Photography by Eric Rietveld

5. Secure and Mainstream Positive Effects for Biodiversity

5.1 Positive effects - Why this matters

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity in all of their activities. This includes:

- Integrating biodiversity considerations into their decision-making processes;
- Engaging with staff, partners and the public to raise awareness and promote understanding of biodiversity issues.

and further mandated by the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011

- Produce a report every three years detailing actions to comply with this biodiversity duty.

Securing positive effects for biodiversity is one of six statutory outcomes introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. National Planning Framework 4(NPF4) embeds biodiversity considerations into the planning process, the policy aims to create sustainable and resilient environments that benefit both people and nature. Policy 3 is the main framework for protecting biodiversity, however improving biodiversity is a cross-cutting theme that runs throughout NPF4.

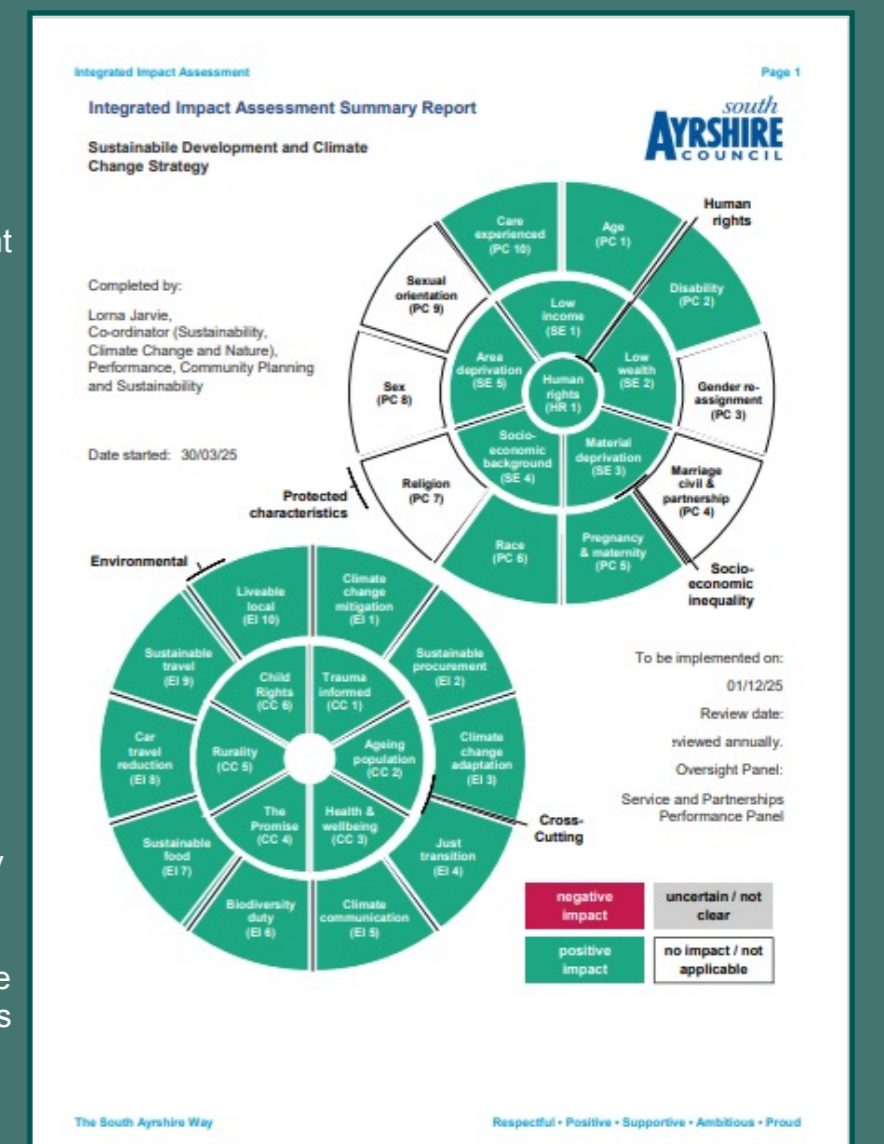
5.2 Positive effects - Case Studies

Integrated Impact Assessment

An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has to be carried out for all proposals that will have a significant impact or result in a significant change for the communities or staff of South Ayrshire Council, and is seeking approval from Elected Members.

The IIA has ten questions for Sustainability, Climate Change and Biodiversity, that ask decision makers to assess for positive and negative impacts providing justification for the impact rating and providing information on any mitigations required for negative impacts.

As the IIA is completed, a summary document is generated, offering a clear visual overview of the positive and negative impacts of the assessed policy and any mitigations required.



Sustainable Design Guidance

Our Professional Design Services Team have produced South Ayrshire Council Sustainable Design Guidance (SAC SDG) Part 1 that covers South Ayrshire Council's; non-domestic and domestic new-build developments, and non-domestic estate refurbishment.

The guidance outlines a clear pathway to help the Council meet Scottish Government Net Zero targets. It promotes a holistic approach to sustainability, and addresses Biodiversity and Ecology as one of its key areas.

The guidance focuses on the following aspects that run through the design process.

- Conservation, restoration, expansion and improvement of habitats and green spaces by;
 - Protecting irreplaceable habitats
 - Retaining, and mitigating damage to, existing habitats
 - Achieving overall biodiversity Net Gain, and
 - Mitigating the impacts of climate change
- Improving, and reinstating, links between green spaces, habitats and wider ecosystems
- Safeguarding protected species
- Removing, and preventing the spread of, invasive species
- Benefitting and engaging communities by;
 - Improving access to, and time spent in, nature, for all demographics.
 - Getting people from local communities (more) involved in management of local green spaces.
 - Providing/Enhancing economic benefits of green spaces (such as farming/community food production, providing sustainable resources/materials, tourism and other business opportunities)
- Taking account of NPF4 Policy 3.
- Ensuring that spaces can be maintained, without pollution, and minimising the resources required to do so.
- Designing with function and usability in mind

Proposals must target an increase of the Green Space Factor(GSF) of a site by +10%, and target achievement of a minimum GSF of 0.4 and must also demonstrate a targeted +10% biodiversity net gain in all three of; area habitats, hedgerow, and watercourse biodiversity units defined by DEFRA's Biodiversity metric. Note that at the time that Sustainable Design Guidance was written a Scotland specific tool was under development by the Scottish Government. Once this has been released then this tool should be used for this assessment alongside the Green Space Factor Calculation.

5.3 Positive effects - Our key activities to 2030

Planning plays a vital role in protecting and enhancing biodiversity. It is a statutory duty for all local planning authorities to have regard for biodiversity conservation. The planning system offers an opportunity to reverse biodiversity loss through promoting wildlife conservation and habitat restoration.

The SAC Ecology and Biodiversity Planning Guidance Note, stipulates that planning applications take account of policy 3 of the [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4) which is set out as follows:

'To protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks.'

South Ayrshire Council is preparing the evidence report for our next [Local Development Plan \(LDP3\)](#), which is timetabled to be completed June 2029. We will develop the LDP in line with national guidelines and mitigation hierarchy to protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity. It will also promote nature recovery and nature restoration across the development plan area, including by:

- facilitating the creation of nature networks and strengthening connections between them to support improved ecological connectivity.
- restoring degraded habitats or creating new habitats
- incorporating measures to increase biodiversity, including populations of priority species.

Biological records are vital in planning and development decision making. We will work in partnership with the nature subgroup stakeholders we will produce a species list for South Ayrshire. We will also work with partners to increase participation in wildlife recording the and South Ayrshire Council will mainstream the sharing of information gathered in the course of its duties with our local environmental recording centre.

We will mainstream and support the implementation of both our Integrated Impact Assessments and the Sustainable Design Guidance, ensuring that biodiversity is integrated into our decision-making and operations.



Red Squirrel

Red squirrels can still be found in the Southern region of South Ayrshire, however they are critically threatened in South Ayrshire due to habitat loss and the presence of grey squirrels that outcompete them for food and carry squirrelpox virus. Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere have launched The Red Squirrel Recovery Network Project to raise awareness and promote conservation efforts in the region.

Photography by Eric Rietveld

6. Protect, enhance, restore, and create habitat for nature

6.1 Protect, enhance, restore - Why this matters

Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is to conserve at least 30% of Land, Water and Seas by 2030. This is known as the 30 by 30 initiative and in Scotland 30 by 30 sites are made up of Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

6.2 Protect, enhance, restore - Case Studies

Wildflower meadows - *Photography by Eric Rietveld*

Our Grounds Maintenance team have been creating wildflower areas throughout South Ayrshire on areas that were formally amenity grassland. The wildflower sites are mostly annual mixes that benefit pollinators and the sites also create a more visually appealing and diverse range of open spaces for members of the public to enjoy.

Golf South Ayrshire have created large perennial meadows on areas of rough on their Belleisle, Seafield and Lochgreen golf courses. Perennial meadows are in flower from May through to late September providing a food source for pollinating insects throughout the summer. The meadow areas are cut and removed once a year, and are adjacent to areas of vegetation that is left uncut to provide overwintering habitat for invertebrates. Which is especially beneficial to caterpillars and pupae of our butterfly and moth species.

Wetlands

We have created wetland scrapes in Rozelle Park, these are areas that retain water throughout the summer providing habitat for amphibians and aquatic invertebrates.

New wetland habitats have been introduced at Belleisle Golf Course enhancing the course for both people and nature. Ponds have been designed to collect and hold excess water during periods of heavy rainfall, helping adapt to our changing climate. The ponds have shallow edge margins to provide habitat for frogs and aquatic invertebrates, the deeper areas provide suitable breeding habitat for toads. The wetland areas are surrounded by wildflowers and other habitats to benefit wildlife.



6.3 Protect, enhance, restore - Our key activities to 2030

South Ayrshire Council estate offers potential to deliver biodiversity enhancements to benefit both nature and people. This strategy recognises the amenity and recreational value our green spaces have and the need for a balance to make best use of our green and blue spaces. We will create management or maintenance plans for South Ayrshire Council owned Greenspace that reflects the Open Space Strategy and biodiversity outcomes.

We will work with local communities and partners to identify sites suitable for habitat creation, enhancement or opportunities to enhance the council estate for nature, and use the spatially mapped Nature Networks to help identify opportunity areas throughout South Ayrshire.

We will work with partners to develop a set of 'ready to go' project proposals at varying scales to take advantage of any future funding opportunities that may arise.

7. Connecting people with nature

7.1 Connecting people - Why this matters

Disconnection with nature is one of the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss. Connecting people with nature matters as it improves well-being and inspires people to care for and protect nature.

Time in natural settings reduces stress, boosts mood and improves physical health. By providing people with a wide range of opportunities where they can become involved in activities in their local greenspace can nurture healthier individuals and stronger communities.

Tackling the nature emergency is one of the greatest challenges we face in this generation and we recognise the best way to approach this is through collaboration with all partners and the support of our local communities. The Community Planning Partnership through the Nature subgroup will continue to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and to show that even small changes can make a big difference in protecting our natural world.

7.2 Connecting people - Case Studies

The South Ayrshire Ranger Service runs Adult and Junior Conservation Volunteer groups. Volunteering provides an opportunity for people to make a difference for nature and become more involved in their local greenspace, it is also a form of gentle to moderate exercise and provides a social outlet for those who are interested in the natural world.

Pollinator Friendly Symington was formed by a group of residents to make their gardens pollinator friendly and to create a network of pollinator sites throughout the village. The group shares skills and knowledge to garden for wildlife in mind and organises events and activities to engage people in wildlife recording. The group also maintains a wildflower verge in the village and have planted pollinator friendly trees.



7.3 Connecting people - Our key activities to 2030

We will continue to support local groups and individuals that are interested in making a difference for nature in South Ayrshire. We will look to build an online presence for information, resources and advice that will share knowledge and inspire others.

The Stepping Stones project, the pilot will support 12 communities in South Ayrshire to make space for nature. A range of resources and communications will be prepared to spread the word and help everyone in South Ayrshire understand what is happening locally and how they can play their part. The project will help people to connect with and support nature locally in ways that work for them and in turn will grow environmental awareness and support both climate literacy and green health.

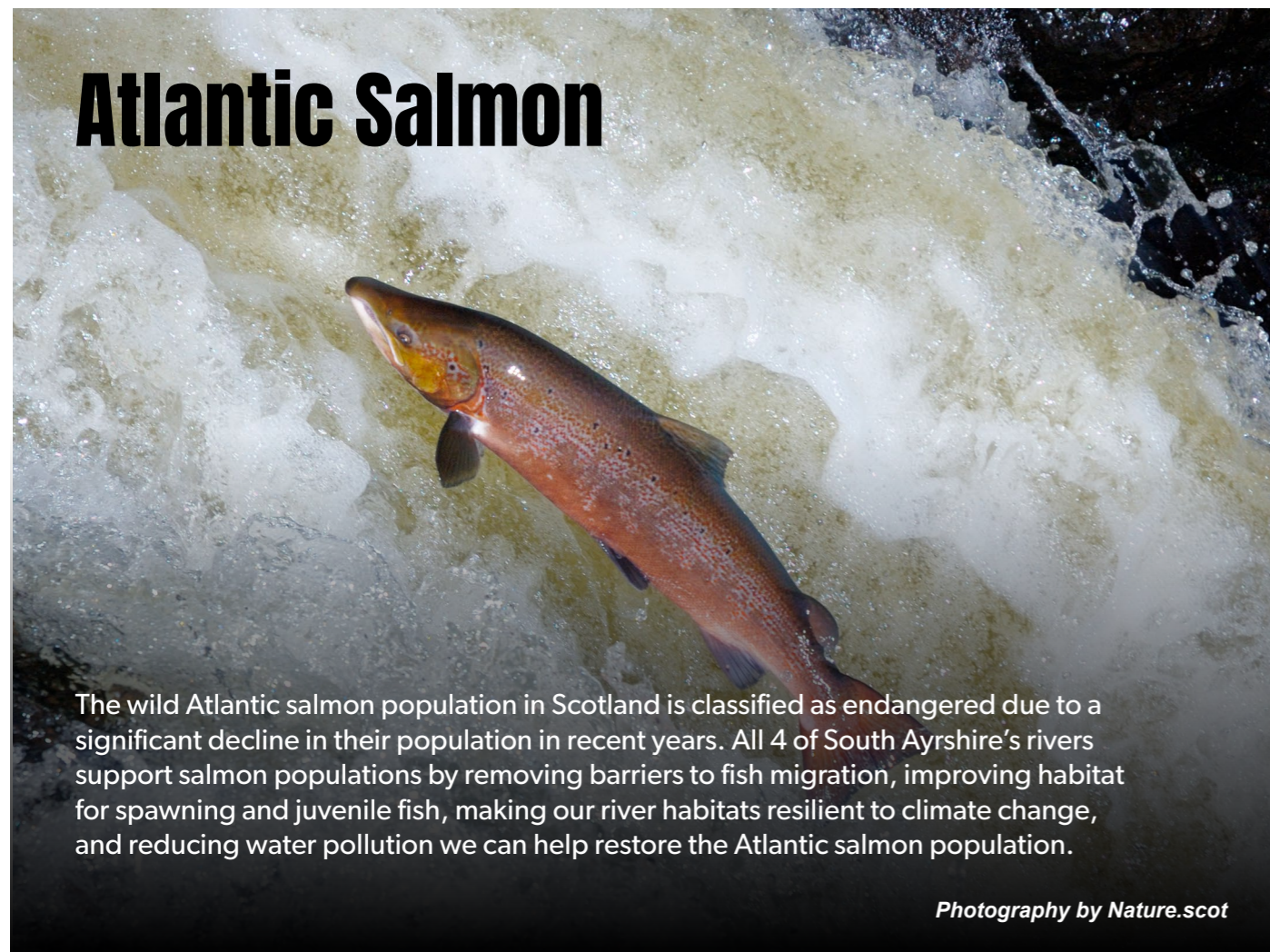
8. Enabling delivery and capacity building

Nature literacy, communications and training will be used to support a shift in ethos, renewed motivation for action and support implementation of both Integrated Impact Assessment and Sustainable Design Guidance, delivering better decisions for the council. We will monitor our progress and work to increase the wildlife data for South Ayrshire to inform decisions:

- Increase our wildlife recording to support our nature networks and planning processes.
- Inform service planning with integration of the strategy activities into the performance reporting system.
- Use best practice guidelines to monitor species and habitats to gauge whether activities have benefitted biodiversity.

The Community Planning Partners recognises they cannot tackle the nature emergency alone. The partnership will continue to develop an enabling approach, through the nature subgroup of the Sustainability SDP, to engage with all stakeholders.

This will support a broad understanding of how the Community Planning Partnership can deliver a holistic local-led approach contributing to the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy’s aim to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and restore biodiversity by 2045.



Atlantic Salmon

The wild Atlantic salmon population in Scotland is classified as endangered due to a significant decline in their population in recent years. All 4 of South Ayrshire’s rivers support salmon populations by removing barriers to fish migration, improving habitat for spawning and juvenile fish, making our river habitats resilient to climate change, and reducing water pollution we can help restore the Atlantic salmon population.

Photography by Nature.scot

Appendix 1 Legislation, strategies, policies and targets

International

The UN Convention on Biodiversity 2050 – Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Target of ‘Living in Harmony with Nature’ remains central to international thinking. Its aim is that: ‘By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.’

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

‘Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services’ (2019) identified five main direct drivers for biodiversity loss. These are:



The Habitats Directive

The Habitats Directive is the short name for European Union Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

The Directive led to the establishing of European sites and setting out how they should be protected, it also extends to other topics such as European protected species.

In Scotland, the Habitats Directive is translated into specific legal obligations by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. This piece of legislation is usually known as the Habitats Regulations.

National

Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004

The SABAP will meet the council’s statutory duty under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 for all public bodies to ‘further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. This biodiversity duty is about taking care of nature all around us, not just in specific protected sites and for particular species.’ (NatureScot,2023)

The Habitats Regulations

In Scotland, the Habitats Directive is translated into specific legal obligations by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. This piece of legislation is usually known as the Habitats Regulations.

The Habitats Regulations cover the requirements for:

- protecting sites that are internationally important for threatened habitats and species – i.e. European sites
- a legal framework for species requiring strict protection – i.e. European protected species

The Habitats Regulations have been amended in Scotland, most recently in 2019 as a result of the UK leaving the EU. These amendments mean that we must continue to apply the requirements of the Habitats and Birds Directives to how European sites are designated and protected.

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045

This strategy sets out a clear ambition: for Scotland to be **Nature Positive** by 2030, and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity across the country by 2045. Our vision is:

By **2045**, Scotland will have restored and regenerated biodiversity across our land, freshwater and seas.

Our natural environment, our habitats, ecosystems and species, will be diverse, thriving, resilient and adapting to climate change.

Regenerated biodiversity will drive a sustainable economy and support thriving communities, and people will play their part in the stewardship of nature for future generations.

Natural Environment Bill

The Bill put in place key legislative changes to restore and protect nature, including, but not restricted to, targets for nature restoration that cover land and sea, and an effective, statutory, target-setting monitoring, enforcing and reporting framework.

National Planning Framework 4

Scotland's planning system and development have an important contribution to make towards addressing the global biodiversity crisis. This is reflected in the Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4), which sets out new requirements for development to deliver positive effects, primarily under Policy 3.

Nature Networks are embedded throughout the fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) as a key means of ensuring positive effects for biodiversity from development. Across multiple policies the leading role that Local Authorities will have in facilitating the design and implementation of Nature Networks, through Local Development Plans (LDPs) for example, is clear.

Framework for Nature Networks in Scotland

By 2030 Scotland will have evolving, flexible and resilient Nature Networks connecting nature-rich areas allowing wildlife and natural processes to move and adapt to land use and climate change pressures. The networks will help build people's connection to nature, providing biodiversity-rich spaces that deliver local benefits, and meet the priorities of local communities for nature. Local Authorities up to have a spatially defined Nature Network, connecting important areas for biodiversity, by 2030.

Photography by Eric Rietveld

Appendix 2 National Planning Framework 4 - Policy 3

a) Development proposals will contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including where relevant, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks and the connections between them. Proposals should also integrate nature-based solutions, where possible.

b) Development proposals for national or major development, or for development that requires an Environmental Impact Assessment will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention. This will include future management. To inform this, best practice assessment methods should be used. Proposals within these categories will demonstrate how they have met all of the following criteria:

i. the proposal is based on an understanding of the existing characteristics of the site and its local, regional and national ecological context prior to development, including the presence of any irreplaceable habitats.

ii. wherever feasible, nature-based solutions have been integrated and made best use of

iii. an assessment of potential negative effects which should be fully mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy prior to identifying enhancements.

iv. significant biodiversity enhancements are provided, in addition to any proposed mitigation. This should include nature networks, linking to and strengthening habitat connectivity within and beyond the development, secured within a reasonable timescale and with reasonable certainty. Management arrangements for their long-term retention and monitoring should be included, wherever appropriate

v. local community benefits of the biodiversity and/or nature networks have been considered.

c) Proposals for local development will include appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with national and local guidance. Measures should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development. Applications for individual householder development, or which fall within scope of (b) above, are excluded from this requirement.

d) Any potential adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts, of development proposals on biodiversity, nature networks and the natural environment will be minimised through careful planning and design. This will take into account the need to reverse biodiversity loss, safeguard the ecosystem services that the natural environment provides, and build resilience by enhancing nature networks and maximising the potential for restoration." (P38)

The NPF4 provides the following definitions of terms:

"Mitigation Hierarchy"

The mitigation hierarchy indicates the order in which the impacts of development should be considered and addressed. These are:

i. Avoid – by removing the impact at the outset.

ii. Minimise – by reducing the impact.

iii. Restore – by repairing damaged habitats.

iv. Offset – by compensating for the residual impact that remains, with preference to on-site over off-site measures.



Glossary

Definitions are taken from accepted international sources where practical such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD Glossaries) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES Glossary).

Biodiversity

Short for biological diversity, the diversity of life in all its forms – the diversity of species, of genetic variations within one species, and of ecosystems.(CPD)

Conservation

The management of human use of nature so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to current generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations. (CBD)

Conservation of Biodiversity

The management of human interactions with genes, species, and ecosystems so as to provide the maximum benefit to the present generation while maintaining their potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations; encompasses elements of saving, studying, and using biodiversity. (CBD)

Corridor

A geographically defined area which allows species to move between landscapes, ecosystems and habitats, natural or modified, and ensures the maintenance of biodiversity and ecological and evolutionary processes. (IPBES)

Ecosystem

Communities of organisms interacting with each other and with their non-living environment – forests, wetlands, mountains, lakes, rivers, deserts and agricultural landscapes. (CBD - modified)

Ecosystem diversity

The variety of ecosystems that occurs within a larger landscape, ranging from biome (the largest ecological unit) to microhabitat. (CBD)

Ecosystem health

Ecosystem health is a metaphor used to describe the condition of an ecosystem, by analogy with human health. Note that there is no universally accepted benchmark for a healthy ecosystem. Rather, the apparent health status of an ecosystem can vary, depending upon which metrics are employed in judging it, and which societal aspirations are driving the assessment. (IPBES)

Ecosystem services

Processes by which the environment produces benefits useful to people, akin to economic services. (CBD)

Endangered species

A technical definition used for classification referring to a species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. IUCN The World Conservation Union defines species as endangered if the factors causing their vulnerability or decline continue to operate. (CBD)

Extinction

The evolutionary termination of a species caused by the failure to reproduce and the death of all remaining members of the species; the natural failure to adapt to environmental change. (CBD)

Extirpation

The local or regional loss of a species that stills exists elsewhere. This is sometimes referred to as local extinction.

Functional connectivity (landscape connectivity)

The degree to which the landscape facilitates the movement of organisms (animals, plant reproductive structures, pollen, pollinators, spores, etc.) and other environmentally important resources (e.g., nutrients and moisture) between similar habitats. Connectivity is hampered by habitat fragmentation (q.v.). (IPBES – for Landscape connectivity)

Genetic diversity

The variety of genes within a particular population, species, variety, or breed. (CBD)

Habitat

A place or type of site where an organism or population naturally occurs. (CBD) Habitat degradation The diminishment of habitat quality, which results in a reduced ability to support organisms. Human activities leading to habitat degradation include polluting activities and the introduction of invasive species. Adverse effects can become immediately noticeable, but can also have a cumulative nature. Biodiversity will eventually be lost if habitats become degraded to an extent that species can no longer survive. (CBD – modified)

Habitat fragmentation

Fragmentation of habitats occur when a continuous habitat has become divided into separate, often isolated small patches interspersed with other habitats. Small fragments of habitats can only support small populations and these are more vulnerable to extirpation. The patches may not even be habitable by species occupying the original undivided habitat. The fragmentation also frequently obstructs species from migrating. Habitat fragmentation stems from geological processes that slowly alter the lay out of the physical environment or human activities such as land clearing, housing, urban development and construction of roads or other infrastructure. Adverse effects sometimes are not immediately noticeable and sufficient habitats may ostensibly be maintained. However inbreeding, lack of territories and food shortage are some of the problems small populations can encounter. Fragmentation of habitats is therefore expected to lead to losses of species and genetic diversity in the longer term. (CBD – modified)

Habitat loss

The outcome of a process of land use change in which a 'natural' habitat-type is removed and replaced by another habitat-type, such as converting natural areas to production sites. In such process, species that previously used the site are displaced or destroyed. Generally this results in a reduction of biodiversity. (CBD – modified)

In situ conservation

A conservation method that attempts to preserve the genetic integrity of gene resources by conserving them within the evolutionary dynamic ecosystems of the original habitat or natural environment. (CBD)

Invasive species

Invasive species are those that are introduced – intentionally or unintentionally – to an ecosystem in which they do not naturally appear and which threaten habitats, ecosystems, or native species. These species become invasive due to their high reproduction rates and by competing with and displacing native species that naturally appear in that ecosystem. Unintentional introduction can be the result of accidents (e.g. when species escape from a zoo), transport (e.g. in the ballast water of a ship); intentional introduction can be the result of e.g. importing animals or plants or the genetic modification of organisms. (CBD)

Keystone species

A species that has a disproportionately large effect on its environment relative to its abundance. (Paine 1995, the term's originator.)

Landscape

An area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. (EU – European Landscape Convention)

Mitigating measures (mitigation)

Measures that allow an activity with a negative impact on biodiversity, but reduce the impact on site by considering changes to the scale, design, location, process, sequencing, management and/ or monitoring of the proposed activity. It requires a joint effort of planners, engineers, ecologists, other experts and often local stakeholders to arrive at the best practical environmental option. An example is the unacceptable impact on biodiversity of the construction of a certain road that is mitigated by the construction of a wildlife viaduct. (CBD – modified)

Native species

Plants, animals, fungi, and micro-organisms that occur naturally in a given area or region. (CBD)

Nature (natural environment)

All living and non-living things, and processes that occur naturally on Earth. (CBD – modified)

Nature-based solution

Actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human wellbeing and biodiversity benefits. (IUCN)

Nature network

A Nature Network connects together naturerich sites, including restoration areas and other environmental projects, through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors, and stepping-stones. Nature-positive Halting and reversing nature loss by 2030, measured from a baseline of 2020. (Locke et al. 2020.)

Red List

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on taxa that have been globally evaluated using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. This system is designed to determine the relative risk of extinction. (CBD – modified)

Regeneration

The process of assisting the recovery of ecosystem processes serving and/or enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. This may not necessarily be the original habitat type or include the original species communities. In woodland, regeneration is the spontaneous recovery of native tree species that colonise and establish in abandoned fields or natural disturbances; this process can also be assisted through human interventions such as fencing to control livestock grazing, weed control, and fire protection. (Crouzeilles et al. 2017.)

Restoration

The process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem towards or to good condition, as a means of conserving and/or enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience; for habitat types listed in Annexes I and II, restoration means the process of assisting their recovery to the highest level of condition attainable. (EU – proposed)

Restoration measure

Any measure assisting ecosystem recovery actively or passively towards or to good condition and enhancing biodiversity, including measures taken for the improvement of the condition of an ecosystem or for the re-establishment of natural and semi-natural ecosystems, as well as measures to improve the connectivity of natural and seminatural ecosystems, and to enhance species populations, also across national borders. (EU – proposed)

Species

A group of organisms capable of interbreeding freely with each other but not with members of other species. (CBD)

Species diversity

The number and variety of species found in a given area in a region. (CBD) Sustainable development Development that meets the needs and aspirations of the current generation without compromising the ability to meet those of future generations. (CBD from Bruntland Commission Report, 1987.)

Wild species

Organisms captive or living in the wild that have not been subject to breeding to alter them from their native state. (CBD)

Wildlife

Living, non-domesticated animals. Some experts consider plants also as part of wildlife. (CBD)

30 by 30

Target 3 in the Global Biodiversity Framework “Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial, inland water, and of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories”. For Scotland 30 by 30 sites are made up of Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

Integrated Impact Assessment Summary Report

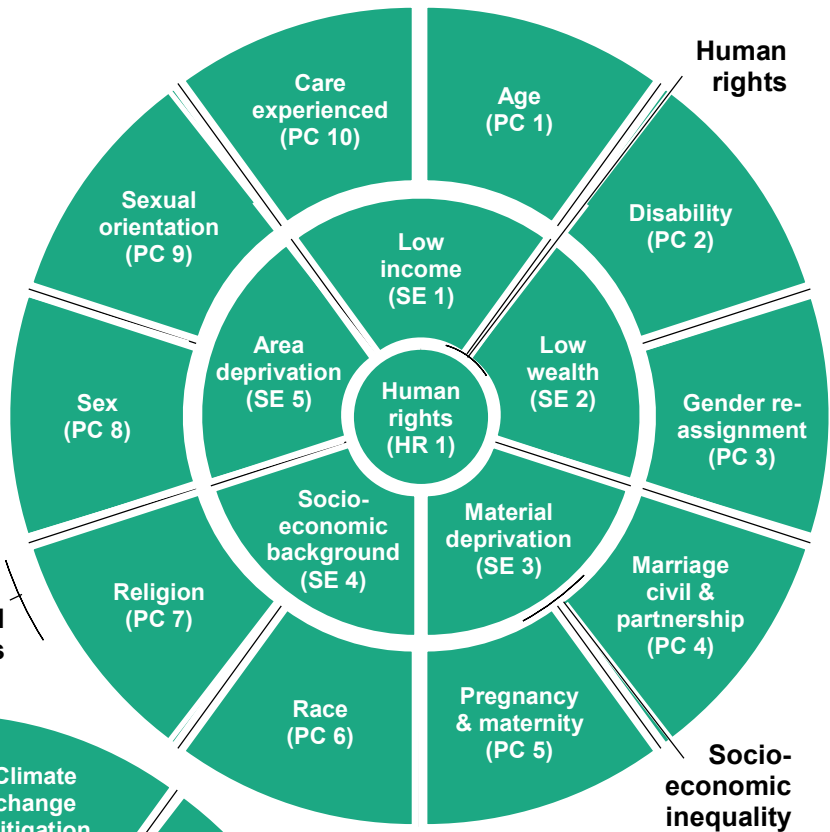


Biodiversity Strategy

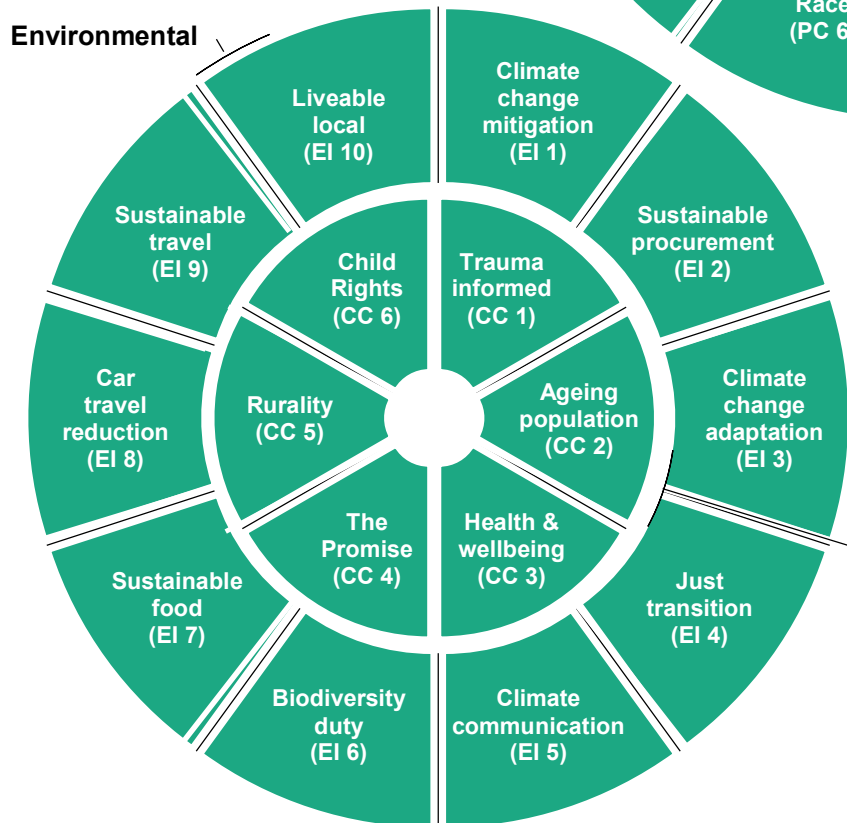
Completed by:

Joanne McEwan,
Climate Change & Biodiversity
Officer,
Performance, Community Planning
& Sustainability

Date started: 15/01/26



Protected characteristics



Environmental

Cross-Cutting

To be implemented on:

01/02/26

Review date:

viewed annually

Oversight Panel:

Community planning
partnership

negative impact	uncertain / not clear
positive impact	no impact / not applicable

Public sector equality duty

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation?

This strategy supports the protection and enhancement of nature for all. In this way it is seeking to address rather than deepen inequality and ensure ecosystem services are equally available to all, providing good quality of life and a level playing field for further cooperation and collaboration as communities

Advancing equality of opportunity?

This strategy supports the protection and enhancement of nature for all. In this way it is seeking to address rather than deepen inequality and ensure ecosystem services are equally available to all, providing good quality of life and a level playing field for further cooperation and collaboration as communities

Fostering good relations?

This strategy supports the protection and enhancement of nature for all. In this way it is seeking to address rather than deepen inequality and ensure ecosystem services are equally available to all, providing good quality of life and a level playing field for further cooperation and collaboration as communities

Consultation declaration

We confirm consultation has been carried out as part of this process.

**Child Rights & Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) summary
CRWIA for a non-legislative policy/measure**

CRWIA title:

South Ayrshire Biodiversity Strategy

Publication date:

31st January 2026

Summary of policy aims and desired outcomes

This strategy sets out who we will act locally to achieve Scottish targets to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and restore biodiversity by 2045

Executive summary

Nature provides physical, consumable goods and services that we could not live without such as - breathable air, drinkable water and food. We have a duty to halt biodiversity loss to protect these life giving systems for future generations.

Background:

This is the first biodiversity strategy for South Ayrshire.

Scope of the CRWIA, identifying the children and young people affected by the policy, and summarising the evidence base:

Halting Biodiversity loss is about ensuring that children, young people and their families can enjoy a good quality of life now and in the future.

Children and young people's views and experiences:

Wider engagement opportunities as part of the public survey. Ongoing engagement with young people as part of the Ranger Service activities .

Key Findings, including an assessment of the impact on children's rights, and how the measure will contribute to children's wellbeing:

Actions within the strategy will support children and young people to have their voices heard by the adults who require to shape actions and take decisions over the next 5 years.

Monitoring and review:

Monitoring of the strategy will take place through the Performance reporting system.

CRWIA Declaration Authorisation

Policy lead:

Joanne McEwa, Climate Change & Biodiversity Officer, Sustainability, Climate Change & Nature

Date:

15/01/26

Deputy Director or Equivalent:

Kevin Anderson, Assistant Director (Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance)

South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership Board



Report by Thriving Communities Co-ordinator, South Ayrshire Council to
Community Planning Partnership Board Meeting of Wednesday 29th January 2026

Subject: Violence Against Women Strategy (2026-2029)

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Violence Against Women Strategy 2026–2029 (Appendix 1), which has been approved by the Community Safety Partnership, and to outline the strategic priorities, partnership responsibilities, and intended outcomes for preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in South Ayrshire

2 The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Community Planning Partnership Board endorses the strategy, including its strategic priorities, partnership-wide actions, and the proposed governance and reporting arrangements for delivery through the Violence Against Women Partnership.

3 Background

- 3.1 Violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains a significant issue impacting individuals, families and communities. The refreshed Violence Against Women Strategy has been developed by the Violence Against Women Partnership (VAWP) to align with national priorities while reflecting local needs and lived experience.

The Strategy is structured around four local priorities:

- **Equality & Respect:** Embedding healthy relationships education and community awareness campaigns;
- **Women & Girls Thriving:** Providing safe housing, tailored support plans, counselling, advocacy and opportunities for education, employment and training;
- **Early & Effective Interventions-** Strengthening pathways to support, increasing access to trauma-informed services, and ensuring recovery-focused responses for women, children and young people; and
- **Perpetrator Accountability:** Challenging harmful attitudes, engaging men and boys in prevention, and ensuring robust justice responses and behaviour change programmes.

The Strategy has been informed by local data, engagement with partners, and feedback from survivors and frontline services.

4 Progress

- 4.1 Partners have continued to promote prevention and awareness activity, strengthen referral pathways and embed trauma-informed practice across services. Governance arrangements have been refreshed through clearer reporting from thematic groups and improved alignment with wider CPP priorities. Work to date also includes developing consistent multi-agency training and enhancing links with housing, education, justice and community-based supports

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 The Violence Against Women Partnership will continue to drive delivery of the Strategy and coordinate multi-agency action across all priority areas. Work to prevent and address violence against women and girls will remain aligned with Community Planning Partnership outcomes, and progress will be monitored and reported annually through Pentana.

The South Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership Strategy 2026 - 2029

south-ayrshire.gov.uk

end violence against
women & children
south ayrshire multi agency partnership



south
AYRSHIRE
COUNCIL
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Deas
Making a Difference Every Day

Our vision is
to ensure all women and girls
in South Ayrshire are Safe,
Respected and Empowered
and live in communities that
are Informed; and reject all
forms of violence against
women and girls



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Introduction

The South Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership (SAVAWP) remains firmly committed to addressing all forms of violence against women and girls as a fundamental breach of human rights and a barrier to equality. Violence against women is recognised as gender-based violence, rooted in inequality, power imbalances and societal attitudes.

Since the launch of our 2022–2025 strategy, partners across South Ayrshire have worked tirelessly to improve prevention, protection and provision. This has been achieved despite the challenges of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and increasing pressures on public services. Through strong partnership working, we have continued to deliver high-quality services, promote awareness, and strengthen our joint response to gender-based violence.

Looking ahead, our vision for 2026–2029 is clear: to ensure all women and girls in South Ayrshire are safe, respected and empowered, and to build communities that are informed, resilient and reject all forms of violence and abuse. SAVAWP will continue to be guided by the national Equally Safe strategy, embedding trauma-informed practice, amplifying the voices of women with lived experience, and ensuring early and effective intervention.

As Chair of SAVAWP, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of all our partner organisations and the communities we serve. Together, we will continue to challenge inequality, strengthen prevention, and support recovery and empowerment for women, children and young people across South Ayrshire.



Cllr Laura Brennan-Whitefield,
Chair – South Ayrshire
Violence Against Women
Partnership

National Context

The South Ayrshire Violence Against Women Partnership fully supports the national Equally Safe Strategy, Scotland's framework for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls. Originally published in 2014 and updated most recently in 2023, Equally Safe sets out a vision for:

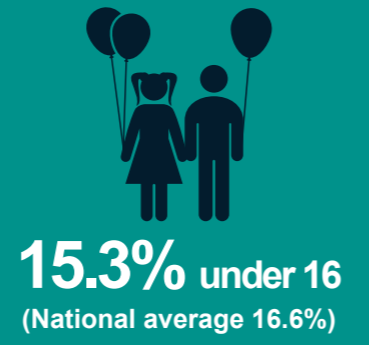
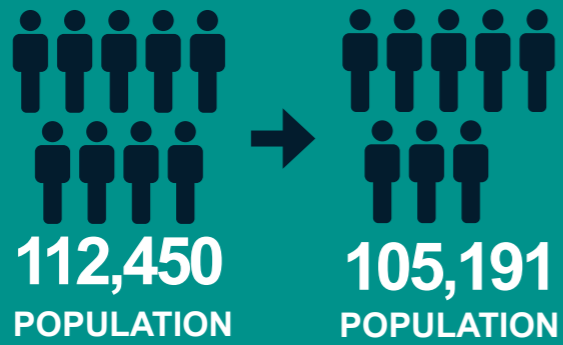
“A strong and flourishing Scotland where all individuals are equally safe and respected, and where women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse, and the attitudes that help perpetuate it.”

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) continues to be recognised as both a cause and consequence of gender inequality. It encompasses, but is not limited to:-

- › Physical, sexual and psychological violence within families, communities or institutions, including domestic abuse, rape and incest.
- › Sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation in public and private spaces, including the workplace and online platforms.
- › Commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, pornography, stripping and trafficking.
- › Child sexual abuse and exploitation, including online abuse.
- › So-called 'honour-based' violence, including female genital mutilation, forced marriage and 'honour' crimes.

South Ayrshire Overview

Between 2021 and 2043 the population of South Ayrshire is projected to decrease from 112,450 to 105,191. This is a decrease of 6.9% which compares to a projected increase of 1.7% for Scotland as a whole.



58.6% of the population are working age (16-64) compared with **63.8%** Nationally



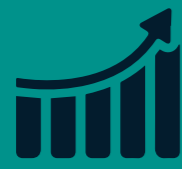
26.1% 65+
(National average 19.6%)



11.9% 75+
(National average 8.7%)



By 2043 it's estimated the number of people 75+ years will have increased by 35% from **13,664** people in 2021 to **21,040**



In 2021, South Ayrshire had the 4th highest dependency ratio in Scotland



South Ayrshire has 7 datazones in the top 5% most deprived vigintile



In 2022, there were 56,453 dwellings in South Ayrshire. **95.5%** were occupied dwellings which is slightly less than national rate of **95.7%**



About The Council

Elected Members
Independent 12
Conservative 5
SNP 5
Labour 5
ALBA 1



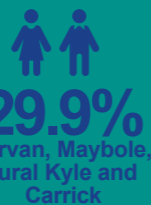
Staff
4,971 full-time equivalent
(as at 31 March 2024)



70.1%
Ayr, Prestwick
and Troon



29.9%
Girvan, Maybole,
rural Kyle and
Carrick



(Source: National Records of Scotland, Small Area Population Estimates 2021)

● TROON

● PRESTWICK

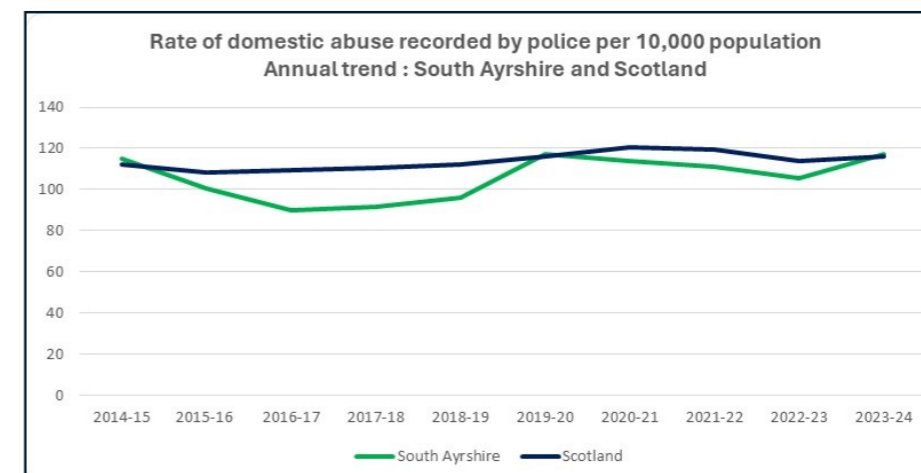
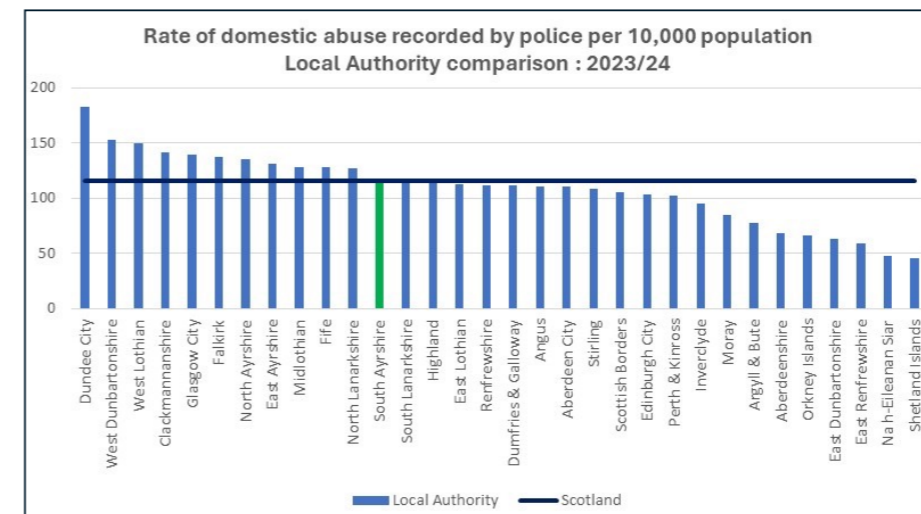
● AYR

○ MAYBOLE

○ GIRVAN

What we know

- › In 2023/24 the rate of police recorded domestic abuse incidents in South Ayrshire was 117 per 10,000 population compared to the Scottish average of 116.
- › The rate in South Ayrshire is higher than the previous year (2022-23) and highest it has been since 2019-20.
- › This represents an increase of 11.2% in the last year. (Scotland 2.3% increase)
- › This represents an increase of 2.7% over last three years. (Scotland 3.5% decrease).
- › In 2023-24 South Ayrshire ranked 12th out of 32 local authority areas in Scotland for the rate of domestic abuse incidents.
- › 41.5% of domestic abuse incidents recorded by police in South Ayrshire in 2023/24 include a crime or offence. (Scotland 38.7%).
- › South Ayrshire has followed similar trend to Scotland over the last 10 years but with larger increases over this time.



Police Scotland Update

1 April - 30 September 2025



Sexual Crime has increased 10.5% in the reporting period and up 9.6% compared with the 5-year average. Rape crimes have reduced slightly compared to the previous year to date, with 12 crimes reported (14 in the previous year). Sexual assaults reports remain consistent, with 37 offences recorded. The overall increase in sexual crime aligns with national trends, largely driven by a rise in online/internet communicating indecently offences alongside other online/cyber related offences, which account for much of the reported increase. Domestic Abuse crimes remain consistent, with 47 in the reporting period. Officers in South Ayrshire attended 609 domestic incidents, a reduction of 12.8% in overall domestic incidents reported to police. This is in contrast with the national increase in domestic abuse incidents which rose 2.1%. 47% of domestic abuse incidents resulted in criminality being established. Proactive policing of domestic bail requirements has resulted in 46 offences being identified relating to perpetrators breaching bail conditions. This proactive approach also includes continual victim liaison and safeguarding measures being implemented, both within the police service and in conjunction with partner agencies.

Sexual Crime – Dedicated Public Protection officers are based in Ayrshire to investigate Sexual offences and are supported by specialist officers dedicated to helping the victims of such crimes. Rape crimes are down 22% on the 5-year average which

represents a positive trend. Locality officers continue to work proactively to reduce the number of victims of sexual crime, collaborating closely with partners in the Violence Against Women and Girls network to strengthen prevention and early intervention. ‘Sextortion’ offences have increased 1200% in the reporting period, which reflects greater victim confidence in reporting such incidents to police. It is noted however that many of these offences are domestic related, are perpetrated from abroad or involve young offenders and victims, for which campus officers continue to provide online safety inputs at schools. Online offending remains a priority for officers within Specialist Crime Division, who continue to support us locally, deploying the latest technology and investigative techniques to identify and act against offenders residing in, or targeting victims across South Ayrshire communities.

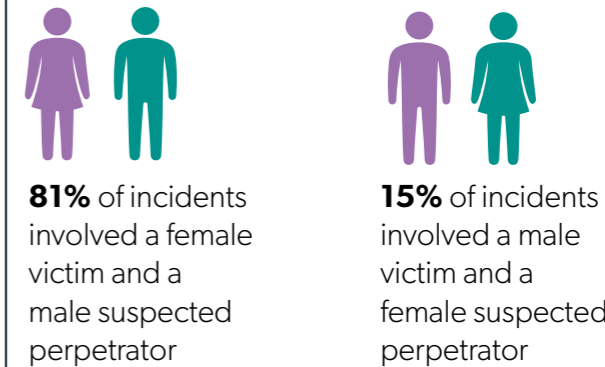
Domestic Abuse Crimes remain a daily operational focus, ensuring victims are protected, supported and confident to report to police. Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) referrals in South Ayrshire for the Q2 period (50 disclosures made) continue to rise, demonstrating the commitment and effectiveness of the Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Team. Across Scotland the number of applications has soared by 17.7 per cent, highlighting its continued use, greater awareness of its existence, and its value in Scotland to aid prevention of domestic abuse.

WHO were the victims?



In 2023-24, more than 4 out of 5 (83%) victims of domestic abuse were female, where known

WHAT was the gender of the victims & suspected perpetrators?



In the remaining 3% of cases, victim and suspected perpetrators were the same gender

WHERE did the incidents occur?



90% of domestic abuse incidents occurred in a home or dwelling (where location was known)

WHEN did the incidents occur?



31% of domestic abuse incidents occurred at the weekend

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
14%	13%	14%	13%	14%	16%	16%

Local partners, including South Ayrshire Women’s Aid, Moving on Ayrshire, ASSIST, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Police Scotland, South Ayrshire Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership, continue to provide essential services and collect intelligence to inform prevention, protection, and recovery.



Local Policies & Procedures

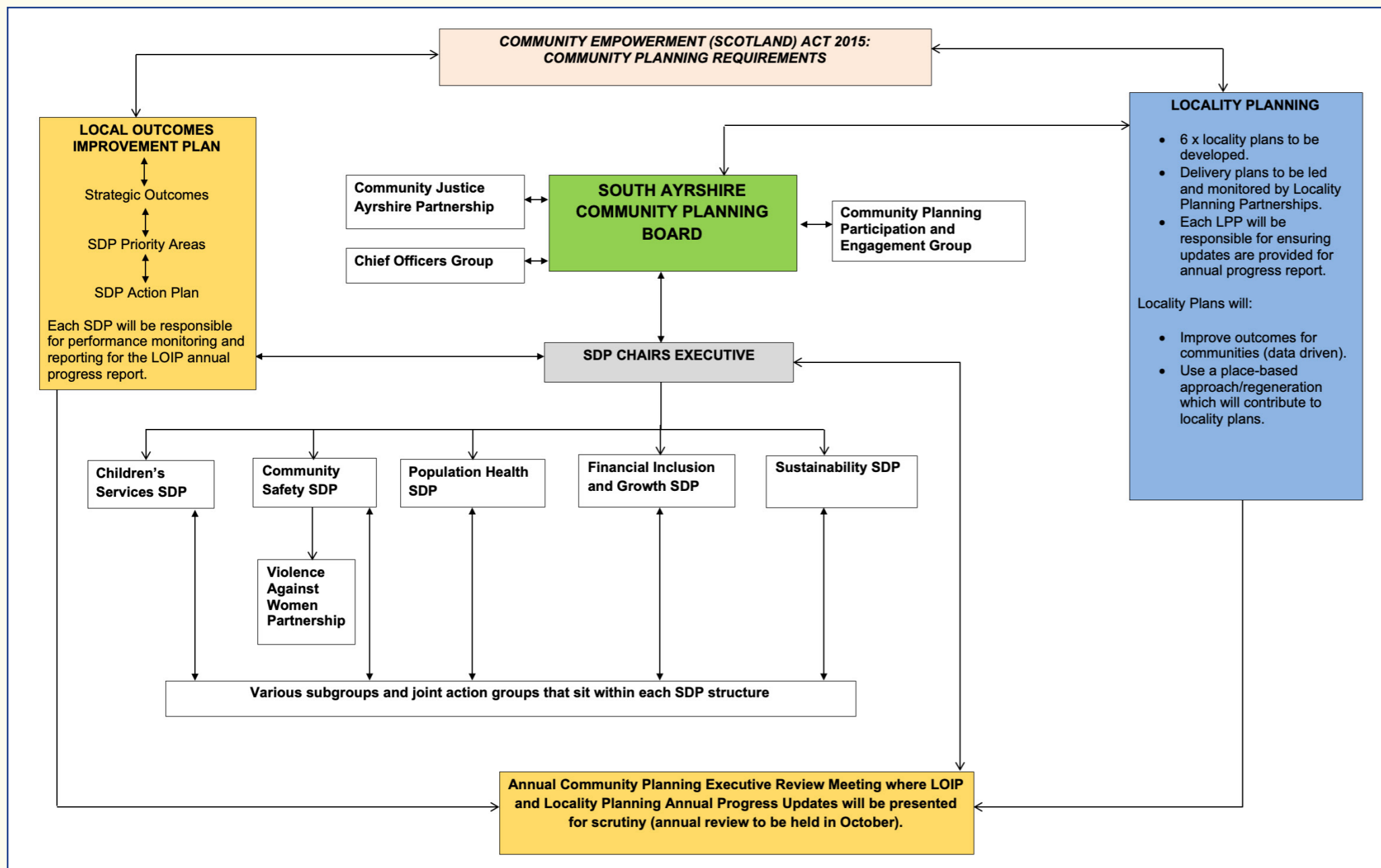
The Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2024–2029 for South Ayrshire [Local Outcomes Improvement Plan \(south-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](https://south-ayrshire.gov.uk) sets out the key priorities [priority areas](#) that underpin strategic planning and partnership working across the area. The LOIP focuses on two high level outcomes, Place and Wellbeing, incorporating key priorities including Community Safety, Population Health, Children’s Services, Sustainability, and Financial Inclusion and Growth.

The South Ayrshire Council Plan 2023–2028 further supports these priorities through its overarching themes of Spaces and Places, Live, Work and Learn, and Civic and Community Pride, recognising the vital link between our environment, communities, and overall wellbeing.

The Violence Against Women (VAW) Partnership operates within the Community Planning framework, providing strategic leadership and coordination of work to prevent and address all forms of violence against women and girls. The Partnership reports directly to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), ensuring alignment with wider priorities around safety, wellbeing, and equality.

Supporting the Partnership, the Violence Against Women Joint Action Group (JAG) lead on the delivery of the priorities within the VAW Strategy. The JAG reports to the VAW Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership, strengthening links between violence prevention, community safety, and local wellbeing outcomes.

Through these interconnected structures, South Ayrshire’s VAW Partnership ensures a coordinated, multi-agency approach that contributes to the delivery of the LOIP outcomes and the wider Community Planning vision for a safer, more equitable South Ayrshire.



Education and Community Learning & Development (CLD)

Education and Community Learning & Development (CLD) play a vital role in delivering early intervention and prevention activity that supports the aims of this strategy. Through collaborative work with schools and community organisations, Education, Police Scotland and Thriving Communities contribute to raising awareness, challenging gender inequality, and promoting healthy, respectful relationships across South Ayrshire.

This work aligns with the priorities outlined in the South Ayrshire CLD Partnership Plan (2024–2027) [South Ayrshire Community Learning & Development Partnership Plan 2024-2027](#), which focuses on improving life chances, empowering communities, and fostering inclusion. Through the CLD Partnership, targeted programmes and learning opportunities are delivered in schools and community settings.



Trauma Informed Practice



South Ayrshire’s approach to tackling violence against women is underpinned by a trauma informed and responsive approach to practice and policy. This ensures that all services and practitioners resist re-traumatisation by working within systems that realise the prevalence of trauma; recognise it’s impacts; and can respond appropriately and provide compassionate, empowering support to all those affected, through a relational approach that builds resilience and supports recovery. Partners across the Violence Against Women Partnership are committed to embedding trauma informed principles in policy, service design, and front-line practice, ensuring that women, children, and young people are supported in safe, and respectful way, and experience safety, choice, collaboration, trust, and empowerment throughout their journey. In practice, this means ensuring that all interventions, whether advocacy, risk assessment or multi-agency planning, are delivered in ways that recognise the impact of trauma, prioritise emotional safety and empower survivors to make informed choices without fear of re-traumatisation

[Roadmap for Creating Trauma Informed and Responsive Change National Trauma Transformation Programme](#)

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The strategy recognises the close link between experiences of violence, trauma, and poor mental health. In alignment with the [South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership \(HSCP\) Strategic Plan 2021–2031](#), partners are committed to promoting positive mental health through prevention, early intervention, and accessible, person-centred support.

Partnership working between VAW services, HSCP, Education, and CLD helps to build supportive networks that reduce isolation, improve wellbeing, and empower survivors to recover and thrive.



Children, Young People and Families

This strategy supports the priorities outlined in the [Children and Young People’s Services Plan \(2023–2026\)](#), particularly the themes of The Promise, Families, and Voice. It recognises the importance of early intervention and safeguarding, ensuring that children and young people affected by gender-based violence are listened to, protected, and supported.



Alcohol and drug use are recognised both as risk factors for experiencing or perpetrating violence and as consequences of trauma linked to gender-based violence. The South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) plays a key role in prevention, early intervention and recovery. [Our Strategy | South Ayrshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership](#)

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

South Ayrshire operates a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to jointly manage the highest-risk cases of domestic abuse. MARAC brings together Police Scotland, Women’s Aid, ASSIST, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, HSCP, Housing, Education, and relevant third sector partners to:-

- Share risk-critical information
- Improve safety planning
- Reduce repeat victimisation
- Coordinate actions to support survivors and their children

The MARAC process in South Ayrshire aligns with SafeLives national guidance and contributes directly to the Equally Safe priority of strengthened early and effective intervention.



Justice Services

South Ayrshire Justice Social Work (JSW) contributes to the protection of women and children aligning public protection work with the wider aims of the VAW Partnership. Criminal Justice services support the aims of this strategy through:-

- Delivery of the Caledonian System for men convicted of domestic abuse offences
- Delivery and support of the Caledonian Women’s and Children’s Service to offer women linked to the Caledonian Service are offered the opportunity of support and intervention.
- Robust risk management through MAPPA where relevant
- Court reports and assessments that incorporate trauma, gender-based violence and child protection
- Close partnership working with Police Scotland, ASSIST, Women’s Aid, and children’s services to enhance safety planning
- Implementation of the Safe and Together model across Children’s Health, Care and Justice Services as a domestic abuse informed approach to child welfare and protection and to ensure domestic abuse is recognised as a parenting choice; that perpetrators are held to account and that we work with non-abusing partners to meet the needs and goals of children and families impacted by domestic abuse.
- We will continue to review other interventions in relation to working with the perpetrators of domestic abuse where the Caledonian System is not suitable.



Housing Services play a critical role in preventing homelessness and supporting women affected by violence and abuse. The service is aligned with key local policies and plans, including the [Local Housing Strategy](#), Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, and Housing Management Policies Housing, Operations and Development Directorate – Housing Services, all of which reference domestic abuse and promote trauma informed practice.



The work of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran (NHS A&A) Gender Based Violence (GBV) Steering Group informs the delivery and implementation of the NHS A&A GBV Action Plan (2021-2026). The plan focuses on the health system tackling GBV. The

recently published refresh of Equally Safe “Scotland’s Strategy preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls” demands a whole systems approach with a substantial and sustained effort and commitment from all to tackling violence against women and girls in any shape or form. The NHS as a front line service is a key partner in the delivery of Equally Safe.

An Inclusive Health Approach to Violence and Violence Prevention details an understanding of how life-course events shape and influence the risks/likelihood of people being impacted and harmed, or become a perpetrator of violence. The approach outlines the opportunities to understand need and risks through a developmental, trauma-informed and human-rights lens, with related consideration of gendered influences on women and girls, and boys and men. This approach supports an understanding for those impacted by violence and those who are involved with perpetrators, through family life/community life/experiences. Additionally it highlights that gender based violence disproportionately affects women and girls, but does not dismiss the impact that it has on men and boys.



Child Poverty

Violence against women and girls and child poverty are closely linked through shared drivers of inequality and disadvantage. The [South Ayrshire Child Poverty Strategy \(2024–2029\)](#) aims to reduce poverty and promote inclusion, goals that complement the ambitions of this strategy. Addressing poverty, improving financial inclusion, and supporting economic empowerment are key to enabling women and children to live free from violence and abuse.

Summary

The Violence Against Women Strategy for South Ayrshire is informed by and contributes to a range of interconnected local strategies and plans. Through collaboration with partners in the 3rd Sector, Education, Thriving Communities, Police Scotland, HSCP, Children’s Services, and Community Planning, the VAW Partnership ensures that work to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls is trauma informed, evidence-based, and embedded within the wider wellbeing and equality priorities for South Ayrshire.

Consultation and Engagement Process

In developing the Violence Against Women Strategy, a consultation and engagement process was undertaken to ensure that the voices of partners and the wider community were reflected in the final strategy. Initial engagement took place with key partners through Community Planning, Community Safety Partnership, Violence Against Women Partnership, and Joint Action Group, followed by a wider opportunity for feedback during South Ayrshire Council’s 16 Days of Action campaign.

The findings from the consultation highlight a clear need for increased awareness, improved access to services, and stronger community involvement to support women and girls across South Ayrshire. Feedback also emphasised the importance of early education, partnership working, and addressing stigma and harmful attitudes that prevent women and girls from seeking help.

The insights gathered through this process have directly informed the development of the strategy priorities and associated actions, ensuring alignment with the national Equally Safe framework and a strong local evidence base.

A summary of the consultation findings can be accessed [here](#).



Our Priorities

The South Ayrshire Violence Against Women Strategy is underpinned by the four national priorities set out in the equally safe strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls.

These priorities form the foundation for all local action delivered through the Violence Against Women Joint Action Group (JAG). The JAG leads on the development and delivery of the Equally Safe Local Action Plan, ensuring that actions directly contribute to South Ayrshires Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

Equally Safe Priorities	South Ayrshire Outcomes
Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect, and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls	We will support our, schools, and workplaces to promote equality, respect, and inclusion — rejecting all forms of violence, discrimination, and harmful behaviour towards women and girls.
Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically, and politically	We will ensure that Women and girls in South Ayrshire are empowered to participate fully in community life, have equal access to opportunities, and are supported to reach their potential without barriers linked to gender or inequality.
Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children, and young people	We will ensure that women, children, and young people affected by violence and abuse receive early, effective trauma informed support that promotes safety, recovery, and wellbeing.
Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls, and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response	We will empower men and boys to challenge harmful attitudes and behaviours, and we will work with partners to ensure effective and consistent responses to those who cause harm.



Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

SAVAWP is committed to continuous improvement and accountability. Progress on the delivery of the Equally Safe priorities and VAWP Outcomes will be reviewed quarterly through the Violence Against Women Partnership and reported annually to the Community Safety Partnership.

This reporting process allows South Ayrshire to demonstrate impact, share learning and good practice, and ensure that local activity remains aligned with both the Equally Safe Quality Standard and Performance Framework and the locally defined VAWP Outcomes.

South Ayrshire Council
Contact Centre
0300123 0900

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